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THE

MISSIONARY:

AN

Indian Tale.

BY

MISS OWENSON.

WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

FOURTH EDITION.

VOL. II.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. J. STOCKDALE,
NO. 41, PALL MALL.

1811.

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THE

MISSIONARY,

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CHAPTER VIII.

It was the season of visitation of the Guru of Cashmire to his granddaughter. The Missionary beheld him with his train approach her abode of peace, and felt the necessity of absenting himself from the consecrated grove, where he might risk a discovery of his intentions unfavourable to their success. He knew that the conversion of the Brachmachira was only to be effect-

ed by the frequent habit of seeing and conversing with her, and that a discovery of their interviews would be equally fatal to both. Yet he submitted to the necessity which separated them, with an impatience, new to a mind, whose firm tenour was, hitherto, equal to stand the shock of the severest disappointment. Still did his steps involuntarily bend to the skirts of the grove, and still did he return sad, without any immediate cause of sorrow, and disappointed, without any previous expectation. To contemplate the frailty, to witness the errors of the species to which we belong, is to mortify that self-love, which is inherent in our natures; yet to be dissatisfied with others, is to be convinced of our own supe-

riority. It is to triumph, while we condemn—it is to pity, while we sympathize. But, when we become dissatisfied with ourselves; when a proud consciousness of former strength unites itself with a sense of existing weakness; when the heart has no feeling to turn to for solace; when the mind has no principle to resort to for support; when suffering is unalleviated by self-esteem, and no feeling of internal approbation soothes the irritation of the discontented spirit; then all is hopeless, cold, and gloomy, and misery becomes aggravated by the necessity which our pride dictates, of concealing it almost from ourselves. Days listlessly passed, duties neglected, energies subdued, zeal weakened; these were circum-

stances in the life of the apostolic Nuncio, whose effects he rather felt than understood. He was stunned by the revolution which had taken place in his mind and feeling, by the novelty of the images which occupied his fancy, by the association of ideas which linked themselves in his mind. He would not submit to the analysis of his feelings, and he was determined to conquer, without understanding their nature or tendency. Entombed and chained within the most remote depths of his heart, he was deaf to their murmurs, and resisted their pleadings, with all the despotism of a great and lofty mind, created equally to command others and itself. With the dawn, therefore, of the morning, he issued from his

cave, intending to proceed to Sirinagur, determined no longer to confine his views to the conversion of the solitary infidel; but to change, at once, the scene and object, which had lately engrossed all the powers of his being, and to bestow upon a multitude, those sacred exertions, which he had, of late, wholly confined to an individual.

His route to Sirinagur lay near the dwelling of the Priestess. He perceived, at a considerable distance, the train of the Guru returning to his college; Luxima, therefore, was again mistress of her own delicious solitude. The impulse of the man was to return to the grotto, but the decision of the Priest was to proceed, to effect his original

intention. As he advanced, the glittering shafts of Luxima's verandahs met his eye, and he abruptly found himself under the cannella-alba tree, beneath whose shade he had last beheld her. He paused, as he believed, to contemplate its luxuriancy and its beauty, which had before escaped his observation. He admired its majestic height, crowned by branches, which drooped with their own abundance, and hung in fantastic wreaths of green and brilliant foliage, mingling with their verdure, blossoms of purple and scarlet, and berries bright and richly clustered. But an admiration so coldly directed, was succeeded by a feeling of amazement and delight, when he observed the date of the day of his last interview with

Luxima carved on its bark; when he observed, hanging near it, a wreath of the may-hya, whose snowy blossoms breathe no fragrance, and to which an oly-leaf was attached, bearing the following inscription from the Persian of Saddi: "The rose withers, when she no longer hears the song of the nightingale."

The lovely elegance of mind, which thus so delicately conveyed its secret feeling, received a tribute, which the votarist trembled as he presented; and pure and holy lips, which had hitherto only pressed the saintly shrine, or consecrated relic, now sealed a kiss, no longer cold, upon an object devotion had not sanctified. But the chill hand

of religion checked the human feeling as it rose; and the blood ran coldly back to the heart, from which, a moment before, it had been impelled, with a force and violence he shuddered to recollect.

Suddenly assuming a look of severity, as if even to awe, or to deceive himself, he hurried on, nor once turned his eye towards the sunny heights which Luxima's pavilion crowned. He now proceeded through the rocky defile, which formed the mouth of the valley, and advanced into an avenue, which extended for a league, and led to various towns, and different pagodas. This avenue, grand and extensive as it was, was yet composed of a single tree; but it was the banyan-

tree, the mighty monarch of Eastern forests; at once the most stupendous and most beautiful production of the vegetable world. The symbol of eternity, from its perpetual verdure and perpetual spring, independent of revolving seasons, and defying the decay of time, it stands alone and bold, reproducing its own existence, and multiplying its own form, fresh and unfaded amidst the endless generation it propagates; while every branch, as emulous of the parent greatness, throws out its fibrous roots, and, fastening in the earth, becomes independent, without being disunited from the ancient and original stem. Thus, in various directions, proceeds the living arcade, whose great and splendid order the

Architect of the universe himself designed; while above the leafy canopy descend festoons of sprays and fibres, which, progressively maturing, branch off in lighter arches, extending the growing fabric from season to season, and supplying, at once, shade, fruit, and odour, sometimes to mighty legions, encamped beneath its arms; sometimes to pilgrim troops, who make its shade the temple of their worship, and celebrate, beneath its gigantic foliage, their holy festivals and mystic rites. This tree, which belongs alone to those mighty regions, where God created man, and man beheld his Creator, excited a powerful emotion in the bosom of the Missionary as he gazed on it.

It was through the arcades of the wondrous banyan, that a scene finely appropriate struck his view—an Eastern armament in motion, descending the brow of one of the majestic mountains of Sirinagur: the arms of the troops glittering to the sun-beam, flashed like lightning through the dark shade of the intervening woods, while, in their approach, were more visibly seen, elephants surmounted with towers; camels, bearing on their arched necks the gaudy trappings of war; the crescent of Mahomet beaming on the standard of the Mogul legions; and bright spears, and feathery arrows, distinguishing the corps of Hindu native troops; the van breaking from the line to guard the passes, and detachments hanging

back in the rear to protect the equipage; while the main body, as if by an electric impulse, halted, as it gradually reached the valley where it was to encamp. This spectacle, so grand, so new, and so imposing, struck on the governing faculty of the Missionary's character — his strong and powerful imagination. He approached with rapid steps the spot where the troops had halted; he observed the commander-in-chief descend from a Tartar horse; he was distinguished by the imperial turban of the Mogul princes, but still more by the youthful majesty of his look, and by the velocity of his movements. Darting from rank to rank, he appeared like a flashing beam of light, while his deep voice, as it pronounced the word of

command, was re-echoed from hill to hill with endless vibration. Already a camp arose, as if by magic, among the luxuriant shrubs of the glen. The white flags of the royal pavilion waved over a cascade of living water, and tents of snowy whiteness, in various lines, intersected each other amidst the rich shades of the mango and cocoa-tree; the thirsty elephants, divested of their ponderous loads, steeped their trunks in the fountains; and the weary camel reposed his limbs on banks of odorous grasses. All now breathed shade, refreshment, and repose, after heat, fatigue, and action. Faquirs, and pilgrims, and jugglers, and dancers, were seen mingling among the disarmed troops; and the roll of drums, the tinkling of bells,

the hum of men, and noise of cattle, with the deep tone of the Tublea, and the shrill blast of the war-horn, bestowed appropriate sounds upon the magic scene. As the Missionary gazed on the animated spectacle, a straggler from the camp approached to gather fruit from the tree under which he stood, and the Missionary inquired if the troops he beheld were those of Aurengzebe? "No," replied the soldier; "we do not fight under the banners of an usurper, and a fratricide; we are the troops of his eldest brother, and rightful sovereign, Daara, whom we are going to join at Lahore, led on by his gallant son, the 'lion of 'war,' Solyman Sheko. Harassed by fatigue, and worn out by want and heat, after crossing the wild and

savage mountains of Sirinagur, Solyman has obtained the protection of the Rajah of Cashmire, who permits him to encamp his troops in yonder glen, until he receives intelligence from the Emperor, his father, whose fate is at present doubtful *."

The soldier, having then filled his turban with fruit, returned to his camp.

He who truly loves, will still seek, or find, a reference, in every object, to the state and nature of his own feel-

* The new Emperor Aurengzebe had scarcely mounted his throne near Delhi, when he was alarmed with intelligence of the march of Solyman Sheko, by the skirts of the northern mountains, to join his father, Daara, at Lahore.—Dow, 286.

ings; and that the fate of a mighty empire should be connected with the secret emotions of a solitary heart, and that "the pomp and circumstance of war" should associate itself with the hopes and fears, with the happiness and misery of a religious recluse living in remote wilds, devoted to the service of Heaven, and lost to all the passions of the world, was an event at once incredible—and true!

A new sense of suffering, a new feeling of anxiety, had seized the Missionary, when he understood the gallant son of Daara, the idol of the empire, had come to fix himself in the vicinage of the consecrated groves of the Cashmirian Priestess. He knew that, in India,

the person of a woman was deemed so sacred, that, even in all the tumult of warfare, the sex was equally respected by the conqueror and the conquered; but he also knew in what extraordinary estimation the beauty of the Cashmirian women was held by the Mogul princes; and though Luxima was guarded equally by her sacred character and holy vows, yet Solyman was a hero and a prince! and the fame of her charms might meet his ear, and the lonely solitude of her residence lure his steps. This idea grew so powerfully on his imagination, that he already believed some rude straggler from the camp might have violated, by his presence, the consecrated groves of her devotion, and, unable to dismiss the thought, he hurried

back, forgetful of his intention to visit Sirinagur, and believing that his presence only could afford safeguard and protection to her, who, but a short time back, shrunk in horror from his approach. So slow and thoughtful had been his movements, and so long had he suffered himself to be attracted by a spectacle so novel as the one he had lately contemplated, that, notwithstanding the rapidity of his return, it was evening when he reached the sacred grove; he advanced within view of the verandah, he darted like lightning through every alley or deep-entangled glen; but no unhallowed footstep disturbed the silence, which was only animated by the sweet, wild chirp of the mayana; no human form, save his own, peo-

pled the lovely solitude; all breathed of peace, and of repose. In the clear blue vault of heaven the moon had risen with a bright and radiant lustre, known only in those pure regions, where clouds are deemed phenomena. The Missionary paused for a moment to gaze on Luxima's verandah, and thought that, haply, even then, with that strange mixture of natural faith and idolatrous superstition, which distinguished the character of her devotion, she was worshipping, at the shrine of Camdeo, in the almost inspired language of religious sublimity. This thought disturbed him much; and he asked himself what sacrifice he would not make, to behold that pure but wandering soul, imbued with the spirit of Christian truth;

but what sacrifice on earth was reserved for him to make, who had no earthly enjoyment to relinquish? "Yes," he exclaimed, "there is yet one: to relinquish, for ever, all communion with Luxima!" As this thought escaped his mind, he shuddered: had she then become so necessary to his existence, that to relinquish her society, would be deemed a sacrifice? He dismissed the terrific idea, and hurried from a place where all breathed of her, whom he endeavoured to banish from his recollection. As he approached his cave, he was struck by the singular spectacle it exhibited: a fracture in the central part of the roof admitted the light of the moon, which rose immediately above it; and its cloudless rays, concen-

trated as to a focus, within the narrow limits of the grotto, shone with a dazzling lustre, which was increased and reflected by the pendent spars, and surrounding congelations; while a fine relief was afforded by the more remote cavities of the grotto, and the deep shadow of the œcynum, whose dusky flowers and mourning leaves drooped round its entrance. But it was on the altar, from its peculiar position, that the beams fell with brightest lustre; and the Missionary, as he approached, thought that he beheld on its rude steps, a vision brighter than his holiest trance had e'er been blessed with; for nothing human ever looked so fair, so motionless, or so seraphic. His eye was dazzled; his imagination was

bewildered; he invoked his patron saint, and crossed himself; he approached, and gazed, and yet he doubted; but it was no spirit of an higher sphere; no bright creation of religious ecstacy:—it was Luxima! it was the pagan! seated on the steps of the Christian altar; her brow shaded by her veil; her hands clasped upon the Bible which lay open on her knee, and a faint glory playing round her head, reflected from the golden crucifix suspended above it. She slept; but yet so young was her repose, so much it seemed the stealing dawn of doubtful slumber, that her humid eyes still glistened beneath the deep shadow of her scarce-closed lashes: the hue of light which fell upon her features, was blue and faint: and the air diffused around her

figure, harmonized with the soft and solemn character of the moonlight cave. The Monk stood gazing, every sense bound up in one; his soul was in his glance, and his look was such as beams in the eye when it snatches its last look from the object dearest to the doting heart, till an involuntary sigh, as it burst from his lips, chased by its echo, the soft and stealing sleep of Luxima. She started, and looked round her, as if almost doubtful of her identity. She beheld the Missionary standing near her, and arose in confusion, yet with a confusion tinctured by pleasurable surprise.

"Luxima!" he exclaimed, in a voice full of softness, and for the first time addressing her by her

name. "Father!" she timidly returned, casting down her eyes; then, after a short but touching pause, she added, "Thou wonderest much to see me here, at such an hour as this!"

"Much," he returned: "but, dearest daughter, seeing thee as I have seen thee, I rejoice much more."

"Many days," she said, in a low voice, "many days have fled since I beheld thee; and I prophesied, from the vision of my last night's dream, that thy wound would gangrene, were it not speedily touched by the three sacrificial threads of a Brahmin; therefore came I hither to seek thee, and brought with me thy Christian

Shaster, but I found thee not: thinking thou wast performing poojah, near some sacred tank, I sat me down upon thy altar steps, to wait thy coming, and to read thy Shaster; till weariness, the darkness, and the silence of the place, stole upon my senses, the doubtful slumber in which thou didst find me wrapt."

"And dost thou regret," said the Missionary, with a pensive smile, "that the spirit of thy prophecy is false? Or dost thou rejoice, that my wound, which awakened thy anxiety, is healed?" Luxima made no reply—the feeling of the woman, and the pride of the Prophetess, seemed to struggle in her bosom; yet a smile from lips, which on *her* had never smiled before, seemed to

excite some emotion in her countenance. And after a short pause, she arose, and presenting him the Scriptures, said, "Christian, take back thy Shaster, for it should belong to thee alone. 'T is a wondrous book! and full of holy love; worthy to be ranked with the sacred *Veidam*, which the great Spirit presented to Brahma to promote the happiness and wisdom of his creatures." The Missionary had not yet recovered from the confusion into which the unexpected appearance of Luxima, in his groto, had thrown him; he was, therefore, but ill prepared to address her on a subject so awfully interesting, as that to which her simple, but sacrilegious commentary, led. He stood, for a moment, confounded; but, observing that

Luxima was about to depart, he said, "Thou camest hither to seek and to do me a kindness, and yet my presence banishes thee: at least, suffer me to give thee my protection on thy return." As he spoke, they left the grotto together; and, after a long silence, during which, both seemed engaged with their own thoughts, the Missionary said, "Thou hast observed truly, that the inspired work I have put into thy hands is full of holy love; for the Christian doctrine is the doctrine of the heart, and, true to all its purest feelings, is full of that tender-loving mercy, which blends and unites the various selfish interests of mankind, in one great sentiment of brotherly affection and religious love!"

"Such," said Luxima, with enthusiasm, "is that doctrine of mystic love, by which our true religion unites its followers to each other, and to the Source of all good; for we cannot cling to the hope of infinite felicity, without rejoicing in the first daughter of love to God, which is charity towards man. Even here," she continued, raising her eyes in transport, "in a dark forlorn state of separation from our beloved, we live solely in him, in contemplating the moment when we shall be reunited to him in endless beatitude!"

"Luxima! Luxima!" exclaimed the Missionary, with emotion, "this rhapsody, glowing and tender as it is, is not the language of religion, but the eloquence of an ardent en-

thusiasm; it bears not the pure and sacred stamp of holy truth, but the gloss and colouring of human feeling. O my daughter! true religion, pure and simple as it is, is yet awful and sublime—to be approached with fear and trembling, and to be cultivated, not in fanciful and tender intimacy, but in spirit and in truth; by sacrifices of the earthly passions, and the human feeling; by tears which sue for mercy, and by sufferings which obtain it." As he spoke, his voice rose; his agitation increased. Luxima looked timidly in his eyes, and sighed profoundly: the severity of his manner awed her gentle nature; the rigid doctrines he preached, subdued her enthusiasm. She was silent: and the Monk, touched by

her softness and trembling, lest, in scaring her imagination or wounding her feelings, he might counteract the effects he had already, and with such difficulty, produced; or, by personally estranging her from himself, loosen those fragile ties which were slowly drawing her to Heaven; he addressed her in a softened and a tender voice: "Luxima, forgive me! if to thy gentle nature, the manners of a man, unused to any intercourse with thy sex, and wholly devoted to the cause for which he sacrifices every selfish feeling; if, my daughter, I say, they appear cold, rigid, and severe; judge not of the *motive*, by the *manner*; nor think that aught, but the most powerful interest in thy temporal and eternal welfare, could move him to a zeal so ardent, as he has now

betrayed. Forgive him, then, who, to recall thy wandering mind to truth, would risk a thousand lives. Forgive him, whose thoughts, and hopes, and views, are now, all, all engrossed by thee; who makes no prayer to Heaven, which calls not blessing on thy head; whose life is scarcely more than one long thought of Luxima!" The Missionary stopt, abruptly: never had his zeal for conversion led him before to such excess of enthusiasm, as that he now betrayed; while Luxima, touched and animated by a display of tender and ardent feeling, so sympathetic to her own, exclaimed, with softness and with energy, "O father, thus I also feel towards thee; and yet, to see thee prostrate at the shrine of Brahma, *I* would not see thee

changed from what thou art—for thou belongest to thy sublime and pure religion; and thy religion to thee, who art thyself so noble and so true, that, much as I do stand in awe of thee, yet more do I delight to hear, and to behold thee, than any earthly good beside!"

The Missionary pressed his hand to his forehead as she spoke, and drew his cowl over his face. He returned no answer, to a speech, every word of which had reached his inmost heart. Thoughts of a various nature crossed each other in his mind; and those he endeavoured to suppress, were still more dominant than those he sought to encourage. At last a glimmering light fell from the summit of the mound which was

crowned by Luxima's pavilion; and denoted that the moment of separation was near. To conceal from Luxima, that Solyman and his army were encamped in her neighbourhood—and yet to warn her of the danger of wandering alone in the consecrated shades of her dwelling; were points, in his opinion, necessary, but difficult, to reconcile. He, therefore, slightly observed, that, as the scattered troops of Daara were proceeding through Cashmire to Lahore, he would, in future, become the guardian of her wanderings, and hover round her path, at sunset, until the absence of the intruders should banish all apprehension of intrusion. Luxima replied to him only by a sigh half suppressed, and by a look, timid, ten-

der, and doubtful; in which a lingering prejudice, mingled with a growing confidence, and feeling, and opinion, fading into each other, still seemed faintly opposed. She half-extended to him a hand which instinctively recoiled from the touch of his; and when he *almost* pressed it, trembled, and hastily withdrew.

Hilarion, as he wandered back, alone, to his grotto, recalled his last conversation with Luxima; and gave himself up to a train of reflection, new as the feelings by which it was inspired. Hitherto he had considered pleasure and sin as inseparably connected, since, to suffer and to resist, was the natural destiny of man: but the Indian Priestess, so pure, though mistaken in her piety;

so innocent, and yet so pleasurable in her life; so wholly devoted to Heaven, yet so enjoying upon earth, convinced him that his doctrine was too exclusive; and that there were, in this world, sources of blameless pleasure, which it were, perhaps, more culpable to neglect than to embrace.

"It is impious," he said, "to suppose that God created man to taste bitterness only; it is also folly; since, formed as we are, the existence of evil presupposes that of good: for the suffering we endure is but the loss of happiness we have enjoyed, or the privation of that we sigh for: and, though the pride of human virtue may resist the conviction, yet the energy of intellect, the

fortitude of virtue, or the zeal of faith, can have no value in our eyes, but as they lead to the happiness of others, or to our own. The object, even of religion itself, points out to us, a good to be attained, and an evil to be avoided; it prescribes to us as the end of our actions, eternal felicity; nor can a rational being be supposed to act voluntarily, but with a view to his own immediate or distant happiness. That good can indeed alone be termed happiness, which is the most lasting, the most pure; and is not that 'the good which 'faith preferreth?'" At this conclusion he sighed profoundly, and added, "Providence has indeed also placed within our reach, many lesser intermediate enjoyments, and endowed us with strong and almost indestructible

propensities to obtain them; but are they intended as objects of our pursuit and acquirement, or as tests by which our imperfect and frail natures are to be tried, purified, and strengthened? Alas! it is instinct to desire; it is reason to *resist!* The struggle is sometimes too much for the imperfection of humanity. Man, to be greatly good, must be supremely miserable; man, to secure his future happiness, must sustain his existing evil; and, to enjoy the felicity of the world to come, he must trample beneath his feet the pleasures of that which is." It was thus that his new mode of feeling was still opposed by his ancient habit of thinking; and that a mind, struggling between a natural bias and a religious principle of resistance,

between a passionate sentiment and an habitual self-command, became a scene of conflict and agitation. His restless days passed slowly away, in endless cogitations, equally unproductive of any influence upon his feelings or his life. But when evening came, in all the mildness of her softened glories, peace and joy came with her; for then the form of his Neophyte rose upon his view: her smile of languid pleasure met his eye, her accent of tender softness sighed upon his ear: sometimes moving beside him, sometimes seated at his feet—he spoke, and she listened—he looked on her, and she believed: while he trembled from a twofold cause—to observe, that her mind seemed more engaged

with the object who spoke, than with the subject discussed; and that she too frequently appeared to attend to the doctrine, for the sake of him only who preached it. But if in one hour her pure soul expanded to the reception of truth; in the next, it gave up its faculties to a superstition the most idolatrous: if now she pressed to her vestal lips the consecrated beads of the Christian rosary—again she knelt at the shrine of her tutelar idol: when her spiritual guide, affecting a severity foreign to his feelings, reproved the inconsistency of her principles, exposed the folly and incongruity of a faith so vacillating, and urged her openly to embrace, and publicly to profess the Christian doctrine, she fell at

his feet—she trembled—she wept. The feelings of the woman, and the prejudices of the idolatress, equally at variance in her tender and erring mind; fearing equally to banish from her sight the preacher, or to embrace the tenets he proposed to her belief; she said, "It were better to die, than to live under the curse of my nation; it were better to suffer the tortures of Narekah *, than on earth to *lose cast*, and become a wretched Chancalas!" As she pronounced these words, so dreadful to an Indian ear, her whole frame became convulsed and agitated. And the Missionary, endeavouring to sooth the emotions he

* The Brahminical hell.

had excited, sought only to recall that mild and melting loveliness of look and air, his admonitions had chased away, or his severity discomposed; while, frequently, to vary the tone of their intercourse, and to give it a home-felt attraction in the eyes of his Neophyte, he led her to speak of the domestic circumstances of her life, of the poetical mysteries of her religion, and the singular usages and manners of her nation. It was in such moments as these, that the native genius of her ardent character betrayed itself; and that she poured on his listening ear, that tender strain of feeling, or impassioned eloquence, which, brightened with all the sublimity of Eastern style, was characterized by all that fluent soft-

ness, and spirited delicacy, which belongs to woman, in whatever region she exist, when animated by the desire of pleasing *him*, the object of her preference. "And while looks intervened, or smiles," the pleasure which these interesting conversations conferred on a mind so new to such enjoyments, was secretly and unconsciously cherished by the Missionary, and obviously betrayed, by the soft tranquillity and increasing languor of his manner; by the long and ardent gaze of his fixed eyes; by the low-drawn sigh, which so often lingered on the top of his breath; and by all those traits of pleasurable sensation, which spoke a man, in whose strong mind, rigid principles, and tranquil heart, human feeling, even under the

pure and sacred veil of religion, was making an unconscious and insidious inroad. Confirmed by the opinion of others, and by his own experience, into a belief of his infallibility, he dared not even to *suspect* himself: yet there were moments when a look of ineffable tenderness, a ringlet wafted by the wind over his cheek, or eyes drawn in sudden confusion from his face, awakened him from his illusionary dream—and then he flew to prayers and penance, for the indulgence of feelings, which had not yet stained his spotless life, by any thought or deed of evil; and, though the sudden consciousness sometimes struck him, that temptation only was the test of virtue, and that nature could not be said to be subdued, till she had

been tried—yet he seldom suffered himself to analyze feelings, which perhaps would have ceased to exist, had they been perfectly understood. It was thus, the innate purity of the mind betrayed the unconscious sensibility of the heart, while the passions became so intimately incorporated with the spirit, as to leave their influence and agency almost equal. Frequently seeking, in the sophistry of the heart, an excuse for its weakness, he said, "It is Heaven which has implanted in our nature the seeds of all affection, and the love we bear to an individual is but a modification of that sentiment we are commanded to cherish for the species; and surely that love must be pure, which we cherish, without the wish or hope of gather-

ing any fruit from its existence, but that of the pleasure of loving: the disinterestedness of a Christian may go thus far, but can go no further; the purest of all canonized spirits * has said, "The wicked are miserable, because they are incapable of loving. Love, therefore, is solely referable to virtue; it is by the corruption of passion that it ceases to be love. May we then continue to love, that we may continue to be guiltless!"

* Saint Catherine de Genes.

CHAPTER IX.

Peace had fled the breast of the man of God! It had deserted him in wilds, which the tumults of society had not reached; it had abandoned him in shades, where the ravages of passion were unknown; and left him exposed to affliction and remorse, in scenes, whose tranquil loveliness resembled that heaven his faith had promised to his hope. He had brought with him into deserts, the virtues and the prejudices which belong to social life, in a certain stage of its progress; and in deserts, Nature, re-

claiming her rights, unopposed by the immediate influence of the world, now taught him to feel her power, through the medium of the most omnipotent of her passions. Hitherto, forming his principles and regulating his feelings, by an artificial standard of excellence, which admitted of no application to the actual relations of life; governed by doctrines, whose fundamental tenets militated against the intentions of Providence, by doctrines, which created a fatal distinction between the species, substituted a passive submission for an active exercise of reason, and replaced a positive, with an ideal virtue—he resembled the enthusiast of experimental philosophy, who shuts out the light and breath of heaven, to inhale an arti-

ficial atmosphere, and to enjoy an ideal existence.

But Nature had now breathed upon his feelings her vivifying spirit: and as some pleasurable and local sensation, which, at first, quivers in the lip, and mantles on the cheek, gradually diffuses itself through the frame, and communicates a vibratory emotion to every nerve and fibre; so the sentiment, which had, at first, imperceptibly stolen on his heart, now mastered and absorbed his life. He now lived in a world of newly connected and newly modified ideas; every sense and every feeling was increased in its power and acuteness—thoughts passed more rapidly through his

mind, and he felt himself hurried away by new and powerful emotions, which he sought not to oppose, and yet trembled to indulge. He had not, indeed, relinquished a single principle of his moral feeling—he had not yet vanquished a single prejudice of his monastic education; to feel, was still with him to be weak—to love, a crime—and to resist, perfection; but the doctrines which religion inculcated and habit cherished, the vows which bigotry exacted, and prejudice observed; while they scrupulously guarded the inviolable conduct of the priest, had lost their influence over the passions of the man. And the painful vibration, between the natural feeling and conscientious principle,

left him a prey to those internal and harassing conflicts, which rose and increased, in proportion to the respective exercise and action of a passionate impulse, and a rigid sense of duty.

Thus, among the privations of a week, peculiarly holy in his church, and exclusively devoted to religious exercises, he imposed on himself the most difficult of all restraints, that of abstaining from the society of his dangerous Neophyte; but the restless impatience with which he submitted to the severe and voluntary penance, enhanced every pleasure, and exaggerated every enjoyment, he had relinquished. It more sweetly melodized the voice

he languished again to hear. It heightened the lustre of those eyes he sighed again to meet; it endeared those innocent attentions which habit had made so necessary to his happiness; and, by rendering the Indian more dangerous to his imagination than to his senses, invested her with that splendid, that touching ideal charm, which love, operating upon genius, in the absence of its object, can alone bestow.

Dearer to his heart, as she became more powerful to his imagination, her idea grew upon his mind with a terrific influence, disputing with Heaven his nightly vigil and daily meditation. It was in vain that he imposed on himself the law

not to behold, or to commune with her for six tedious days: his steps, involuntarily faithful to his feelings, still led him against his better reason to those places, in whose fragrant shades she appeared to him a celestial visitant: sometimes he beheld her at a distance at the confluence of the streams, engaged in the idolatrous, but graceful rites of her half-resigned religion — and then he believed himself commanded by duty to fly to her redemption, and to rescue her from the ancient errors into which his absence again had plunged her; till, suddenly distrusting the impulse which led him towards her presence, he fled from the sight of the dangerous Heathen, and almost wished, that

infidelity could assume an appearance more appropriate to its own deformity. Sometimes, when the ardour of the meridian sun obliged her to seek the impervious shades of her consecrated grove, he beheld her reclined on flowers, engaged in the perusal of the religious fables of her poetic faith; and then a recollection of a genius which shone bright and luminous even through the errors which clouded its lustre, mingled itself with the actual impression of her beauty; and he believed a communion with a mind so pure, would counteract the influence, while it added to the charm, of a form so lovely.

But when, from the summit of his rocks, when the moonlight sil-

vered their abrupt points, he beheld her, gliding like a pure and disembodied spirit, through the shades of her native paradise, and, with a timid and uncertain step, moving near the woody path which led to his grotto; her countenance and person characterized by the solicitude of anxious tenderness, and the sadness of disappointed hope; then she appeared to him a creature loving as beloved; then he admitted the blessed conviction, that he had inspired another with that feeling, which had given to him a new sense of being; then he was tempted to throw himself at her feet, and to avow the existence of that passion which he now believed, with a mingled emotion of rapture and remorse,

was shared and returned by her who had inspired it. Yet still, habits of religious restraint, even more, perhaps, than religion itself, checked the dangerous impulse; and that ardent sentiment which resisted the force of his reason and the influence of his faith, submitted to the dictates of what might be deemed rather his prejudice than his principle. Shuddering and trembling, he fled from her view, and sought, in the recollection of the infidelity of the Brahminical Priestess, a resource against the tenderness and the charms of the lovely woman. But when, at last, this insupportable absence finally and irresistibly "urged a sweet return;" when the stated exercises of devotion no longer op-

posed the more active duties of conversion; then love, consecrated by the offices of religion, pursued the object of its secret desire; and, the week of self-denial past, the evening of the seventh day became, to him, the sabbath of the heart. He left the cave of his solitude and his penance, and, with a rapid but unequal step, proceeded towards the fatal stream, on whose flowery shores the Priestess of Brahma still offered up her vesper homage to the luminary, whose fading beam was reflected in the up-turned eyes of its votarist.

As he approached the Priestess and the shrine, his heart throbbed with a feverish wildness unknown to its former sober pulse. Pleasure,

enhanced by its recent privation; love, warming as it passed through the medium of an ardent imagination; a consciousness of weakness, cherished by self-distrust; and an apprehension of frailty proportioned to the exaggerated force of the temptation—all mingled a sensation of suffering with the sentiment of pleasure; and the visitation of happiness, to a heart which had of late studiously avoided its enjoyment, resembled that rapid return of health, which is so frequently attended with pain to the exhausted organs; while conscience, awakened by the excess of emotion, dictated a reserve and coldness to the studied manners, to which the ardour of unpractised and impetuous

feelings with difficulty submitted. At last, through the branches of a spreading palm-tree, he beheld, at a distance, the object who had thus agitated and disturbed the calmest mind which Heaven's grace had ever visited. She was leaning on the ruins of a Brahminical altar, habited in her sacerdotal vestments, which were rich but fantastic. Her brow was crowned with consecrated flowers; her long dark hair floated on the wind; and she appeared a splendid image of the religion she professed—bright, wild, and illusory; captivating to the senses, fatal to the reason, and powerful and tyrannic to both.

The Missionary paused and gazed —and advanced, and paused, again;

till, on a nearer approach, he observed that her eager look seemed to pursue some receding object; that her cheek was flushed, and that her veil, which had fallen over her bosom, heaved to its rapid palpitation. Never before had he observed such disorder in her air, such emotion in her countenance, while the abstraction of her mind was so profound, that she perceived not his approach, till he stood before her: then she started as from the involvement of some embarrassing dream; a soft and unrepressed transport beamed in her eyes, which at once expressed joy, surprise, and apprehension; and the changeful hues of her complexion resembled the dissolving tints of an iris, as

they melt and mingle into each other, blending their pale and ruby rays till the vivid lustre fades slowly away upon the colourless air. Pale and smiling as one who was at the same time sad and pleased, she extended her hand to the Missionary, and said, in a voice replete with tenderness and emotion, "My father, thou art then come at last!" While, suddenly starting at the faint rustling of the trees as the wind crept among their leaves, she cast round an anxious and inquiring glance. The Missionary let fall her hand, and, folding his own, he remained silent, and fixed on her a look equally penetrating and melancholy; for the rapture of a re-union so wished for, was now disturbed by doubts,

whose object was vague, and embittered by suspicions, whose existence was agony. Luxima, timid and pensive, cast her eyes to the earth, as if unable to support the piercing severity of his gaze; a transient blush mantled on her cheek, and again left it colourless.

"Luxima," said the Missionary, in emotion, "we meet not now, as we were wont to meet, hailing each other with the smile of peace." With eyes which spoke the heart in every glance, and all the precious confidence of innocence and truth, "I would say," he continued, looking earnestly on her, "that, since we parted, something of thy mind's angelic calmness was forfeited, or

lost; something of thy bosom's sunshine was shadowed, or o'ercast."

"But thou art here," she returned, eagerly, "and all again is peace and brightness." The Missionary withdrew his eyes from her blushing and eloquent countenance, and cast them on the earth. Her looks made too dangerous a comment on the words her lips had uttered, which he felt were too delightful, and feared were too evasive; which his heart led him to believe, and his reason to distrust; and, seating himself beside her on the bank where she now reposed, after a silent pause, which the half-breathed sighs of the Indian only interrupted, he said,

"Well! be it so, my daughter; be still the guardian of thy bosom's secret; pure it must be, being thine. I have no right to wrench it from thee. If it be a human feeling, belonging only to mortality, to hopes which this world bounds, or thoughts which this life limits, I, who am not thy temporal, but thy spiritual friend, can have no claim upon thy confidence. Oh, no! believe me, Luxima, that, between thee and me, nothing can now, or ever will, exist, but the sacred cause which first led me to thee."

This he said with a vehemence but little corresponding to the character he had assumed, and with an air so cold and so severe, that

Luxima, timid and afflicted, had no force to reply, and no power to restrain her emotions. Drooping her head on her bosom, she wept. Touched by her unresisting softness, moved by a sadness, his severity had caused, and gazing with secret admiration on the grace and loveliness of her looks and attitude, as she chased away the tears which fell on her bosom, with her long hair, "Luxima," he said, in a tone which struggled between his secret emotion, and assumed coldness, "Luxima, why do you weep? I am not used to see a woman's tears, save when they fall from hearts which penitence, or grief, has touched; but yours, Luxima—they

fall in such tender softness: dearest daughter, have I offended you?"

"'T is true," said Luxima, cheered by the increasing tenderness of his manner, "thou art so grandly good, so awful in thy excellence, that, little used to wisdom or to virtue so severe, I fear thee most, even when most I——" She paused abruptly, and blushed; then raising her eyes to his, a soft confidence seemed to grow upon their gaze, and, with that fatal smile that so changed the character of her countenance, from the sedate tranquillity of the Priestess to the bashful fondness of the woman, she said, "Father, with us the divine wisdom is not personified, as cold, se-

vere, and rigid; but as the infant twin of love, floating in gay simplicity in the perfumed dews which fill the crimson buds of young camala-flowers *."

"Luxima," he returned, seduced into softness by her tender air, "if I am in look and word severe, such are my habits; but my heart, dear daughter, at least I fear to thee, is too, too weak; and, when I see thee sad, and am denied thy confidence——" He paused; and the rainbow-look of Luxima changing as she spoke, she replied:

* It is thus Brahma is represented in his avatar of divine wisdom.

"I am, indeed, not quite so happy as I have been. Once my lip knew no mystery, my heart no care, my brow no cloud; but, of late, I strive to hide my thoughts even from myself. I oft am sad, and oft regret the glorious death they robbed me of; for, oh! had I expired upon my husband's pyre, in celestial happiness with him I should have enjoyed the bliss of Heaven while fourteen Indras reign."

The Missionary started as she pronounced this rhapsody; a new pang seized his heart, and made him feel as if the deadly drop, which lurks beneath the adder's fang, had been distilled into a vital artery: for Luxima had loved, since Luxima

lamented even that dreadful death itself, which, in her own belief, would have united her eternally to the object for whom her passion still seemed to survive.

"Luxima," he said coldly, "till now I never knew you loved; but though you had, a woe so idle and so causeless, as that you cherish for a long-lost object, is sanctioned neither by sentiment nor duty, by reason nor religion."

"Had he lived," said Luxima, with simplicity, "it would then have been no sin to love."

"Bound to a vestal life," returned the Missionary, changing colour,

"like me devoted to eternal celibacy, can *you* lament an object who would have loved you with a *human passion;* with such a love as should not even be dreamed of in a vestal's thoughts?"

"He was my husband," said Luxima, turning away her eyes, and sighing.

"Not by religion's holy law," replied the Missionary, in a hurried tone of voice; "for forms idolatrous and wild but mock the sacred name; not by the law of sentiment, for no endearing intercourse of heart and soul blended your affections in one indissoluble union, for ye were al-

most strangers to each other; he saw thee but in childhood, and not, as now, a woman!—and so lovely!" He paused, and a deep scarlet suffused even his brow.

"He was at least," said Luxima, with mild firmness, "*my husband* according to the law and the religion of my country."

"But if you have abandoned that religion," returned the Missionary, "the ties it formed are broken, and with them should their memory decay."

"Abandoned it!" repeated Luxima, shuddering, and raising her eyes to heaven. "O Brahma!!"

"Luxima," said the Missionary, sternly, "there is no medium; either thou art a Pagan or a Christian; either I give thee up to thy idols, and behold thee no more, or thou wilt believe and follow me."

"Then I will believe and follow thee," she replied quickly, yet trembling as she spoke.

"O Luxima! would I could confide in that promise! for, through thee alone, I count upon the redemption of thy nation."

"Father," she returned, "a miracle like *that*, can only be performed by thee. Look as I have seen thee look—speak as I have

heard thee speak;—give to others that new sense of truth, which thou hast given to me:—and then——"

"Luxima," interrupted the Missionary, in great emotion; "you are misled, my daughter; misled by the ardour of your gratitude, by an exaggerated sense of powers which belong not to man, but to Heaven, whose agent he is. The power of conversion rests not exclusively with me; in you it might effect more miracles than I have ever manifested."

Luxima waved her head incredulously. "Never," said she, "shall I become the partner of thy pious labours! and should I even appear as thy proselyte, if I were not look-

ed on with horror, I should at least be considered with indifference."

"With indifference!" he repeated, throwing his eyes over the perfect loveliness of her form and countenance: "Luxima, is there on earth a being so divested of all human feeling, as to behold, to hear thee with indifference?"

"Art thou not such a one?" demanded Luxima, with a timid and trembling anxiety of look and voice.

"I, Luxima!—I—" he faltered, and changed colour; then, after a momentary pause, casting down his eyes, he resumed, "To be divested of all faculty of sense, were it possible, would be a state of or-

ganization so fatal and so imperfect, as to leave the being thus formed equally without the wish and without the power of becoming virtuous; for virtue, the purest, the most severe, and, O Luxima! by much the most difficult to attain, is that virtue which consists in the conquest over the impulses of a frail and perverse nature, by religion and by reason. Thinkest thou then, dearest daughter, that it belongs to *my* nature, being man, to live divested of all human feeling, of all human passion; to behold, with perfect insensibility, forms created to delight; to listen with perfect indifference to sounds breathed to enchant; and that when, upon thy cheek, the crimson hues of modesty and pleasure mantle and mix their

soft suffusion; when in thy eyes, rays of languid light——Luxima! Luxima!" he continued vehemently, and in confusion, "I repeat to thee, that there can be no virtue where there is no temptation; no merit, but in resistance; but in an entire subjection, through religion, of those feelings which, by a sweet but dread compulsion, drag us towards perdition. And, oh! if trial be indeed the test of virtue, I at least may hope to find some favour in the sight of Heaven, for my trials have not been few." As he spoke, his whole frame trembled with uncontrollable emotion, and the paleness of death overspread his face.

Luxima, moved by an agitation in one, who had hitherto appeared

to her eyes superior to human feeling, and to human weakness, was touched by an emotion so accordant to the tender softness and ardent sensibility of her own character; and timidly taking his hand, and looking with an half-repressed fondness in his eyes, she said, "Art thou then also human? Art thou not all-perfect by thy nature? I thought thee one absorbed in views of heaven, resembling the pure spirit of some holy Saneasse, when, having passed the troubled ocean of mortal existence, it reaches the Paradise of Kylausum, and reposes in eternal beatitude, at the foot of *Him* who is clothed with the *fourteen worlds**."

* Paraubahzah Vushtoo, or First Cause.

The Missionary withdrew his hand, and reposing on it his head, remained for some time lost in thought; at last he said, "Luxima, have you then among your people such men as you have now described; who, by a perfect abstraction of mind, live divested of all human feeling, and who, walking through life in a state of rigid self-denial, renounce all its enjoyments, from a conviction of their vanity? Can a religion so false as theirs produce an effect so perfect? And can the most powerful sensations, the most tyrannic passions incident to the very constitution of our natures, making an inseparable part of our structure, connected and interwoven with all the powers of existence —can they submit and bend to

the influence of *opinion*; to an idea of excellence originating in, and governed by, a fatal and fanatic superstition; but worthy, from its purity and elevation, to be the offspring of that *grace*, which comes alone from Heaven?"

Luxima replied, "It is written in the Vaides and Shastries, whose light illuminates the earth, that '*the resignation of all pleasure is better than its enjoyment*;' and that he who resists the passions of his nature shall be planted in the world of *daivers*, or pure spirits; there to enjoy eternal bliss. And *one such* person I once knew; who, having abandoned all earthly attachments, and broken all earthly ties, lived remote from man, absorbed in the

contemplation of the *Divine Essence:* never had his lip imbibed the refreshing beverage of the delicious *caulor*, or the juice of newly-gathered fruits; never had he inhaled the odour of morning blossoms, nor bathed in the cool wave which smiles to the light of the night-flower-loving god; never had he pillowed his sacred brow with the downy leaves of the *mashucca*, nor pressed the hand of affection, nor listened to the voice of fondness; and his eye, fixed on earth or raised to heaven, still met no objects but such as tended to chasten his thoughts, or to elevate his soul;—till one day a *holy woman*, devoted to the service of her religion, ascended the high hill, where the hermit dwelt in peace. She came, with

others, in faith and sanctity, to ask his mediation with Heaven, according to the custom of her nation. The woman departed edified from his presence, for she had communed with him on the subject of the nine great luminaries, which influence all human events;—but the soul of the hermit pursued her in secret; *he* whose infant hand grasps the lightning's flash*, the god of the flowery bow, had touched the cold, pure-thought of the recluse with a beam of his celestial fire:—*he loved!*—but he loved a *vestal priestess*, and therefore was forbidden all hope. The Faquir pined in sadness, and sought to wash away his secret fault

* The Indian Cupid is frequently represented armed with a flash of lightning.

in the holiest wave which purifies the erring soul from sin; and the *goddess* of the *eight virgins* received him in her consecrated bosom *. Doubtless he is now one of the *diavers*, the saints, who, by the voluntary sacrifice of mortal life, obtain instant admittance to the heavenly regions." Luxima sighed as she concluded her little tale.

The Missionary echoed her sigh, and raising a look of sadness to her pensive countenance, he demanded, "And knew the vestal priestess the secret of the hermit's love?"

* Gungee, the presiding deity of the Ganges: she has eight vestal attendants, which personify the eight principal rivers in Hindoostan.

"Not until he had passed into the world of spirits; and then a wandering yogi, who had received his last words ere he plunged into the Ganges, brought her, at his desire, a wreath of faded flowers *: the red rose of passion was twined with the ocynum, the flower of despondency; and the fragile mayhya, the emblem of mortality, drooped on the camalata, the blossom of heaven. The faded wreath thus told the love and fate of him who wove it."

"And this fatal priestess, Luxima?" said the Missionary, with an

* Flowers have always been the tasteful medium for the eloquence of Eastern love: like the Peruvian quipas, a wreath, in India, is frequently the record of a life.

increased emotion, showing there was a nerve in his heart, which vibrated in sympathy to the tale she told. Luxima made no reply to the doubtful interrogatory; and the Missionary, raising his eyes to her face, perceived it crimsoned with blushes, while her tearful eyes were fixed on the earth. He started—grew pale; and, covering his face with his hands, after a long silence, he said, "Luxima! thy Hermit was a virtuous though a most misguided man; his temptation to error was powerful; the virtue of resistance was his, and the crime of self-destruction was the crime of his dark and inhuman superstition—terrific and fatal superstition! in all its views injurious to society, and pernicious to the moral nature of man, which

thus offers a soothing but impious alternative to the human suffering, and the human woe; which thus, between infamy and an almost impossible resistance to a clear and fatal temptation, offers a final resource beyond all which reason can bestow, or time effect; beyond all, save that which religion proffereth; and thus alluring the worn, the weary, and long-enduring life to its own wished-for *immolation*, crowns and conceals the fatal act beneath a host of bright illusions, and offers to the suicide rewards, which should belong to him alone who dares to *live* and *suffer*, who feels and who resists; and who, though impelled by passion, or seduced by sentiment, still restrains the wish, corrects the impulse, and rules and breaks the

stubborn feeling nature breathed into his soul when it was first quickened, that, by this daily death, he might ensure that life which is eternal. If, Luxima, there lived such a man, thus enduring and thus resisting, would you not give him your applause?"

"I would give him my pity," said Luxima, raising her hands and eyes in great emotion.

The Missionary replied with a deep sigh, "You would do well, my daughter; it is pity only he deserves." Then, after a long pause, he said firmly, "Luxima, I came hither this evening to commune with thee upon that great subject, which should alone unite us; but the mysterious

emotion in which I found thee wrapt, distracted thoughts, which are not yet, I fear, all Heaven's; nor did thy little story, dearest daughter, serve to tranquillize or sooth them; for, in the mirror of another's faults, man, weak and erring, may still expect to see the sad reflection of his own. But now the dews of evening fall heavily, the light declines, and it is time we part; and, O Luxima! so long as we continue thus to meet, thus may we ever part, in the perfect confidence of each other's virtue, and each other's truth." He arose as he spoke.

Luxima also arose; she moved a few paces, and then paused, and raised her timid eyes to his, with the look of one who languishes to

repose some confidence, yet who stands awed by the severity of the elected confidant.

The Missionary, who now studiously avoided those eloquent looks of timid fondness, whose modesty and sensibility so sweetly blended their lovely expressions, withdrew his eyes, and fixed them on the rosary he had taken from his breast, with the abstracted air of one wrapt in holy meditation. Thus they walked on in silence, until they had reached the vicinage of Luxima's habitation. There, as was his custom, the Missionary paused, and Luxima turning to him said, "Father, wilt thou not bless me, ere we part?" The Missionary extended his pastoral hands above

her seraph head; the blessing was registered in his eyes, but he spoke not, for his heart was full. Luxima withdrew, and he stood pursuing, with admiring eyes, her perfect form, as she slowly ascended to her pavilion: then turning away as she disappeared, he sighed convulsively, as one who gives breath to emotion after a long and painful struggle to suppress or to conceal it. His thoughts, unshackled by the presence of her to whom they pointed, now flowed with rapidity and in confusion; sometimes resting on the mysterious emotion he had observed in the countenance and air of the ingenuous Indian; sometimes on the suicide Hermit; and sometimes on himself, on his past life, his former vows, and existing feelings; but

these recollections, conjured up to sooth and to confirm, served but to disquiet and to agitate; and thus involved in cogitation, slow and lingering in his step, he involuntarily paused as he reached the bank, whose elastic moss still bore the impression of Luxima's light form. He paused and gazed on the altar of her worship; it was to him as some sad memorial, whose view touches on the spring of painful recollection; and the pang which had shot through his heart, when for a moment he had believed her, false as the religion at whose mouldering shrine she stood, again revived its painful sensation, like the memory of some terrific vision, which long leaves its shade of horror upon the awakened mind, when

the dream which gave it has long passed away from the imagination. There is no love where there is no cause for solicitude; and the first moment when hope and fear slumber in the perfect consciousness of exclusive and unalienable possession, is perhaps the first moment when the calm of indifference dawns upon the declining ardour of passion. To the eye of philosophy it would have been a curious analysis of the human heart, to have observed the workings of a strong and solitary feeling, in a character unsophisticated and unpractised; to have observed a passion, neither cherished nor opposed by any external object, feeding on its own vitals, and seeking instinctively to maintain its own vivacity, by

fancying doubts for which it had no cause, and forming suspicions for which it had no subject. Still in search of some hidden reason for the restless conflicts of his unhappy mind, the Missionary stood musing and gazing on the spot where the mysterious emotion of Luxima had excited that painful, suspicious, and indefinite sentiment, of whose nature and tendency he was himself ignorant. He could fear no rival in that consecrated solitude, which his presence alone violated; but he was afflicted to believe that Luxima could muse, when he was not the subject of her reverie; that Luxima could weep, when he caused not her tears to flow; that Luxima could be moved, touched, agitated, and he not be the sole, the power-

ful cause of her emotion. It is this exacting, tyrannic, and exclusive principle which forms the generic character of a true and unmixed passion: it is this feeling by which we seek and expect to master and possess the whole existence of the object beloved, which distinguishes a strong, ardent, and overwhelming sentiment, from those faint modifications of the vital feeling, which serve rather to amuse than to occupy life; to interest rather than absorb existence. It is thus that love, operating upon genius, is assisted by the imagination, which creates a thousand collateral causes of hope and fear, of transport and despair; which, in moderate characters, find no existence, and which, at once fatal and delightful, are the

unalienable inheritance of natural and exquisite sensibility, of a peculiar delicacy of organization, and of those refined habits of thought and feeling to which it gives birth.

While thus occupied, creating for himself ideal sources of pain and pleasure, the twilight of evening was slowly illumined by the silver rising of a cloudless moon; which threw upon the shining earth the shadow of his lofty figure; it tinged with living light the crystal bosom of the consecrated waters; it scattered its rays upon the motionless foliage of the night-loving sephalica, and found a bright reflection in some object which lay glittering amidst the fragments of the ruined altar. When the heart is deeply involved, every sense allies itself to

its feelings, and the eye beholds no object, and the ear receives no sound, which, in their first impression, awakens not the master pulse of emotion. The Missionary saw, in the beaming fragment, some ornament of the sacerdotal vestments of the Brahminical Priestess. Considering it as more consecrated by her touch than by the purposes to which it had been devoted, he stooped, and blushed as he did it, to rescue and preserve it;—but it was no gem sacred to religious ornament; it made no part of the insignia worn by the children of Brahma; it was the *silver crescent* of Islamism; it was the device of the disciples of Mahomet; the ornament worn in the centre of the turban of the Mogul officers; and deeply impressed on its

silvery surface, obvious even to a passing glance, and engraven in Arabic characters, was the name of the heroic and imperial Prince Solyman Sheko.

The Missionary saw this, and saw no more; a tension in his brow, a sense of suffocation, as though life were about to submit to annihilation; a pulse feeble and almost still, limbs trembling, and eyes which no longer received the light, left him no other voluntary power than to throw himself on the earth; while the strong previous excitement produced, for a few seconds, a general diminution of the vital action; and he lay as though death had given peace to those feelings which nothing in life could at the moment

sooth or assuage. From this temporary suspension of existence he was roused by the sound of horses' feet: he startled; he arose, and sprung forward in that direction whence the sound proceeded: he perceived (himself unseen, amidst the trees) a person on horseback, who, standing in his stirrup, and shading his eyes from the lustre of the moonlight, cast round an anxious and inquiring glance, then approached within the hallowed circle of the Brahminical altar.

The Missionary rushed from his concealment—the paleness of his countenance rendered more livid by the moonlight which fell on it, and by the dark relief of his black cowl and flowing robe. He stood,

amidst the ruins of the heathen shrine, resembling the spirit of some departed minister of its idolatrous rites, the terrific guardian of the awful site of ancient superstition. Whatever was the impression of his abrupt and wild appearance, the effect was instantaneous: ere he had uttered a sound, the stranger suddenly disappeared, as if borne on the wings of the wind. The Missionary in vain pursued his flight. After having followed the sounds of the horse's feet, till a deathlike silence hung upon their faded echo, the sole result of his observation was, that the mysterious intruder had fled towards the Mogul camp, which still lay in the plains of Sirinagur; and the sole inference to be drawn from the singular adventure was, that

Luxima was beloved by the son of the imperial Daara—that Luxima was false—and that he was most deceived! This conviction fell on him like a thunderbolt. Thoughts of a new and gloomy aspect now rushed on each other, as if they had been accelerated by the bursting of some barrier of the mind, which, till that moment, had retained them in their natural course. He could not comprehend the nature of those frightful sensations which quivered through his frame—that deadly sickness of the soul with which the most dreadful of all human passions first seizes on its victim. His mind's fever infected his whole frame—his head raged—his heart beat strongly; and all the vital motions seemed hurried on, as if their

harmony had been suddenly destroyed by some fearful visitation of divine wrath. He threw himself on the dewy earth, and felt something like a horrible enjoyment, in giving himself up, without reservation, to pangs of love betrayed, of faith violated, of a jealousy, whose fury rose in proportion to the loveliness of its object, and to the force and ardour of the character on which it operated. His memory, faithful only to the events which aimed at his peace, gave back to his imagination Luxima in all her bewitching tenderness, in all the seduction of her seeming innocence: he felt the touch of her hand, he met the fondness of her look; his heart kindled at her blush of love, and melted at her voice of passion.

He beheld her, bright and fresh, at the rising sun—tender and languid at its setting; but by him these delights of a first and true love were now only remembered to be resigned—these joys, which he had almost purchased with the loss of heaven, could now no longer live for him. Another would gaze upon her look, and meet her caress, and answer to her tenderness; another would send his hopes forth, with the rising and the setting sun: but for him there was no longer a morning, there was no longer an evening! all was the sad gloom of endless night. In a mind, however, such as his, to doubt one moment, was to decide the next—his sole, his solitary, his tyrannic passion, becoming its own retribution, would, he believed,

accompany him to the grave; its object, he determined to resign for ever. To strengthen him in his intention, he opposed the holy calm, the sacred peace, the heavenly hopes and solemn joys of his past and sinless life, to the sufferings, the conflicts, the conscious self-debasement of his late and present existence. He remembered that he was the minister of Heaven; devoted, by vows the most awful and the most binding, to its cause alone; and that he had come into perilous and distant regions, to preach its truths, not by precept only, but by example, and to substitute, in the land of idolatry, the religion of the Spirit, for that of the senses. He sought pertinaciously to deceive himself, and to mistake the feelings which rose

from the pangs of jealousy, for the visitation of conscience, suddenly awakened from its long and death-like slumber, by the fatal consequences of that intoxicating evil, which had so long entranced and "steeped it in forgetfulness." He sought to believe that his guardian angel had not yet abandoned him, and that Heaven itself, by miraculous interposition, had snatched him from an abyss of crime, towards which, an ardent and unguarded zeal for its sacred cause had insensibly seduced him. Struck by the conviction, he prayed fervently, and vowed solemnly; but his prayers and his vows alike partook of the vehemence of those contending passions by which he was moved and agitated. He wept upon the cross

he pressed to his lips—but his tears were not all the holy dew of pious contrition; religion became debtor to the passions she opposed, and the ardour of his devotion borrowed its warmth and energy from the overflowing of those human feelings it sought to combat and to destroy. At last his emotions, worn out by their own force and activity, subsided into the torpor of extreme exhaustion. Throwing himself upon the earth, encompassed by those deep shades of darkness which precede the twilight dawn of day, he slept; but his slumber was broken and transient, and the dreams it brought to his disordered imagination were harassing to his spirits as the painful vigil which had preceded them; for the affliction which

is deep rooted in the heart, which presses upon the vital spring of self-love, and disturbs the calm of conscientious principle, blasting hope, rousing remorse, and annihilating happiness, sets at defiance the soothing oblivion of sleep. Nature, thus opposed to herself, in vain presents the balmy antidote to the suffering she has inflicted—and the repose she offers, flies from the lids her unregulated feelings have sullied with a tear.

CHAPTER X.

The day arose brightly upon the valley of Cashmire. It came in all the splendid majesty of light, bathing in hues of gold the summits of the Indian Caucasus: it came in all the renovating influence of warmth, raising the blossom the night-breeze had laid low; it shed the dews of heaven upon the towering head of the mighty banyan, and steeped in liquid silver the flowers of the vesanti creeper; pervading, with a genial and delicious power, the most remote recess, the most minute production of nature,

and pouring upon the face of the earth, the beneficent influence of that Being from whose word it proceeded. But the day brought no solace in its dawn, no joy in its course, to him, who, in the scale of creation, came nearest in his nature to the Creator;—it brightened not his thoughts; it revived not his hopes; and, for him, its beams shone, its dews fell, in vain.

The minister of the religion of peace arose from his harassing slumber with an heart heavy and troubled, with a frame chilled and unrefreshed. He arose, agitated by that vague consciousness of misery, which disturbs, without being understood, when the mind, suddenly awakened from the transient suspension of its

powers, has not yet regained its full vigour of perception, nor the memory collected and arranged the freshly traced records of some stranger woe, and when the faculty of suffering, alone remains to us in all its original force and activity. Agitated by the tumults of passion, distracted by the suspicions of jealousy, torn by the anguish of remorse, and humbled by the consciousness of weakness, the Missionary now felt the full extent of his progressive and obstinate illusion, in the consequences it had already produced; he felt that the heart which once opens itself to the admission of a strong passion, is closed against every other impression, and that objects obtain or lose their influence, only in propor-

tion as they are connected with, or remote from, its interest. Love was now to him what his religion had once been, and the strongest feeling that rules the human heart stood opposed to the most powerful opinion which governs the human mind:—the conflict was terrific, and proportioned in obstinacy and vigour to the strength of the character in which it was sustained. Knowing no solace in his misery but what arose from the belief that the secret of his weakness was known only to Heaven and to himself, he resolved not to trust its preservation to the issue of chance; but, ere the dreadful passions which shook his soul could realize their fatal influence in crime; ere the fluctuating emotions which degraded

his mind could resolve themselves into iniquity; ere he debased the life which sin had not yet polluted, or broke the vows which were revered, even while they were endangered, he determined to fly the scenes of his temptation, and to cling to the cross for his redemption and support. Yet still, with an heart vibrating from the recent convulsion of its most powerful feelings, he remained irresolute even in his resolution. Convinced of the imperious necessity which urged him to leave, for ever, the object of a passion which opposed itself equally to his temporal and to his eternal welfare; to leave for ever, those scenes which had cherished and witnessed its progress; he still doubted whether he should again, and for the last time, behold her, whose falsehood it was his interest

to believe, and his misery to suspect. Now governed by conscience and by jealousy; now by tenderness and passion — the alternate victim of feeling and religion, of love and of opinion; he continued (wretched in his indecision) to wander amidst the voluptuous shades of his perilous seclusion; hoping that chance might betray him into the presence of his dangerous and faithless disciple, and vowing premeditatedly to avoid her, or to behold her only to upbraid, to admonish, and to leave her for ever. The day, as it passed on, vainly told to his unheeding senses its rapid flight in all the sweet gradations of light and odour, in beams less ardent, and in gales more balmy; till the Missionary, unconsciously descending a path worn

away through a gigantic mass of pine-covered rocks, found himself, at the setting of the sun, near the too well remembered stream of evening worship. He started and shuddered, and involuntarily recoiled; and that fatal moment when he had first seized the up-raised arm of the idolatrous Priestess, rushed to his recollection: the hour—the place—the stream which had since so often reflected in its course the pastor and the proselyte—the tree which had so often shaded their fervid brows when the glow which suffused them was not all the influence of season—the sun, whose descending beam had so often been the herald of their felicity—all looked, all was now, as it had been then, unaltered and unchanged. The Missionary gazed around him,

and sighed profoundly: "All here," he said, "still breathes of peace, as when, myself at peace with all the world, I first beheld this scene of tranquil loveliness. All here remains the same. O man! it is then thy dreadful prerogative alone, to sustain that change of all thy powers which leaves thee a stranger to thyself, lost in the wild vicissitude of feelings, to which thy past experience can prove no guide, thy reason lend no light: one fixed immutable law of harmony and order, regulates and governs the whole system of unintelligent creatures; but thou, in thy fatal pre-eminence, makest no part in the splendid mechanism of nature: exclusive and distinct among the works of thy Creator, to thee alone is granted a

self-existing principle of intellectual pain; a solitary privilege of moral suffering. Vicegerent of Heaven! thou rulest all that breathes, save only thyself: and boasting a ray of the divine intelligence, thou art the slave of instinct, thy principle of action a selfish impulse, and thy restraint an inscrutable necessity."—He paused for a moment, and raising his eyes to the sun, which was descending in all the magnificence of retiring light, still apostrophizing the species to which he belonged, and whose imperfections he felt he epitomized in himself, he continued: "That orb, which rises brightly on thy budding hopes, sets with a changeless lustre on their bloom's destruction; but, in the brief interval of time in

which it performs its wonted course, in uninterrupted order, what are the sad transitions by which the mind of man is subject! what are the countless shades of hope and fear, of shame and triumph, of rapture and despair, by which he may be depressed or elevated, ennobled or debased!" He sighed profoundly, as he concluded a picture of which he was himself the unfortunate original; and, withdrawing his eyes from the receding sun, he threw them, with the looks of one who fears an intrusion upon his solitary misery, in that line where a gentle rustling in the leaves had called his attention. The branches, thick and interlaced, slowly unclasped their folds, and thrown lightly back on either side, by a small and delicate

hand, the Priestess of Brahma issued from their dusky shade; her form lighted up by the crimson rays of that life-giving power, to which she was at this hour wont to offer her vesper homage. She had that day officiated in the Pagoda, where she served, and she was habited in sacerdotal vestments, but there was in her look more of the tender solicitude of an expecting heart, than the tranquil devotion of a soul which religion only occupied. Advancing with a rapid, yet doubtful step, she cast round her eyes with a look timid, tender, and apprehensive, as if she wished and feared, and hoped and dreaded the presence of some expected object—then pausing, she drew aside her veil, lest the almost impalpable web should inter-

cept the fancied sound which expectation hung on. Thus, as she stood animated by suspenseful love, glowing with the hues of heaven, her up-held veil floating, like a sun-tinged vapour, round her; she looked like the tender vision which descends upon Passion's dream, like the splendid image, to whose creation Genius entrusts its own immortality.

O woman! Nature, which made you fair, made you fairest in the expression of this her best feeling; and the most perfect loveliness of a cold insensibility becomes revolting and deformed, compared to that intelligence of beauty which rushes upon the countenance from the heart that is filled with a pure and

ardent affection: then thought breathes upon the lip, independent of sound; and the eye images in a glance, all that the soul could feel in an age!

Unseen, though haply not unexpected, the Missionary stood lost in gazing, and finely illustrated the doctrine which gave birth to his recent soliloquy; for in a moment, thought was changed into emotion, and musing into passion; resolves were shaken, vows were cancelled, sufferings were forgotten; on earth he saw only her, whom a moment before he had hoped never to behold again; and from the world of feelings which had torn his heart, one only now throbbed in its rapid pulse—it was the consciousness of being loved! He saw it in the look, intently fixed upon the path he was

wont to take: he saw it on the cheek which lost or caught its colouring from sounds scarce audible: he saw it in the air, the attitude; he saw it in the very respiration, which gave a tremulous and unequal undulation to the consecrated vestment which shaded, with religious mystery, the vestal's hallowed bosom. Sight became to him the governing sense of his existence; and the image which fascinated his eye, absorbed and ruled every faculty of his mind. A moment would decide his destiny—the least movement, and he was discovered to Luxima: a look turned, or a smile directed towards him, and the virtues of his life would avail him nothing. —He trembled, he shuddered!— Love was not only opposed to reli-

gion, to reason—in his belief, it was at that moment opposed to his eternal salvation! Suddenly struck by the horrible conviction, he turned his eyes away, and implored the assistance of that Heaven he had abandoned. The voice of Luxima came between him and his God. His prayer died, unfinished, on his lips. He paused, he listened; but that voice, sweet and plaintive as it was, addressed not him—its murmuring sounds, broken and soft, seemed only intended for another; for one who had sprung from behind a clump of trees, and had fallen at her feet—It was the Prince Solyman Sheko!! The Missionary stood transfixed, as though a blast from Heaven had withered up his being!

Luxima, apparently agitated by amazement and terror, seemed to expostulate; but in a voice so tremulous and low, that it scarcely could have reached the ear it was intended for.

"Hear me," said the Prince, abruptly interrupting her, and holding the drapery of her robe, as if he feared she would escape him; "hear me! I who have lived only to command, now stoop to solicit; yet it is no ordinary suitor who pleads timidly at thy feet, despondingwhile he supplicates—it is one resolved to know the *best* or *worst* —to conquer thee, or to subdue himself. Amidst the dreams of glory, amidst the tumults of a warrior's life, the fame of thy unri-

valled beauty reached my ear. I saw thee in the temple of thy gods, and offered to thee that homage thou dost reserve for them. From that moment my soul was thine. Thy loveliness hung upon me like a spell; and still I loitered 'midst the scenes thy presence consecrates, while duty and ambition, my fame and glory, vainly called me hence. Thy absence from the temple where thou dost preside, not more adoring than adored; thy holy seclusion, which all lament, and none dare violate, which even a Mussulman respects, blasted my hopes and crossed my dearest views: till yesterday a mandate from my father left to my heart no time for cool deliberation. With the shades of evening I sought the consecrated

grove forbidden to the foot of man; and for the first time presented myself to eyes whose first glance fixed my destiny. Amazed and trembling, thou didst seem to hear me in pity and disdain; then thou didst supplicate my absence—yet still I lingered; but thou didst weep, and I obeyed the omnipotence of those sacred tears—yet, ere I reached the camp, I cursed my weakness, and, listening only to my imperious passion, returned to seek and sue, perhaps, to conquer and be blessed! But in thy stead, I saw, or fancied that I saw, some prying Brahmin, some jealous guardian of the vestal Priestess, placed in these shades to guard and to preserve her from the unhallowed homage of human adoration, as if none but the God she

served was worthy to possess her. For thy sake, not for mine, I fled: but now, while all thy brethren are engaged, performing in their temples their solemn evening worship, I come to offer mine to thee. The sun has *their* vows—thou hast mine. They offer to its benignant influence, prayers of gratitude. Oh! let mine cease to be prayers of supplication; for I, like them, am zealous in my idolatry; and thus, like them, devote what yet remains of my existence to my idol's service." He ceased, and gazed, and sighed.

Luxima had heard him in silence, which was only interrupted by broken exclamations of impatience and apprehension; for her attitude imaged the very act of flight. The

averted head, the advanced step, the strained eye, the timid disorder of her countenance, all intimated the agitation of a mind, which seemed labouring under the expectation of some approaching evil. A pause of a moment ensued; and the Prince, construing her silence and emotion as his wishes directed, would have taken her hand. The indignant glance of Luxima met his. There were, in his eyes, more terrors than his words conveyed. She would have fled. The arms of the unhallowed infidel were extended to inclose in their fold the sacred form of the vestal Priestess; but an arm, stronger than his, defeated the sacrilegious effort, and seizing him in its mighty grasp, flung him to a considerable distance. The Mus-

sulman was stunned: amazement, consternation, and rage, mingled in his darkened countenance. He drew a dagger from his girdle, and flew at the intruder—who suddenly darted forward to ward off the death-blow which threatened him; and, seizing the up-raised arm of the infuriate Prince, he struggled with his strength, and wrenching the weapon from the hand that brandished it, flung it in the air. Then, with a look dignified and calm, he said, "Young stranger, thou wouldest have dishonoured thyself, and destroyed me. I have saved thee from the double crime; give Heaven thanks: return whence thou camest; and respect, in future, the sacred asylum of innocence, which thy presence and thy professions alike violate."

The Prince, struck, but not daunted, by a firmness so unexpected, replied, with indignation in his look, and rage storming on his brow, "And who art thou, insolent! who thus darest command? By thy garb and air, thou seemest some adventurer from the West, some wretched Christian, unconscious that, for the first time, thou art in the presence of a Prince."

The large dark eye of the Missionary rolled over the form of the youth in haughtiness and pity. His lips trembled with a rage scarcely stifled, his countenance blazed with the indignant feelings which agitated his mind. He struggled religiously against himself; but the saintly effort was unequal to combat

the human impulse—he paused to recover his wonted equanimity of manner, and then returned:

"Who am I, thou wouldest know? I am, like thee, young Prince, a man, alive to the dignity of his nature as man, resolved, as able, to defend it; with sinews no less braced than thine, a heart as bold, an arm as strongly nerved; descended, like thyself, from royal race, and born, perhaps like thee, for toil and warfare, for danger and for conquest: but views of higher aim than those which kings are slaves to, replaced a worldly, with a heavenly object; and he, whom thou hast dared to call a wretch, tramples beneath his feet the idle baubles for which thy kindred steep

their hands in brothers' blood; great in the independence of a soul which God informs, and none but God can move!" The Missionary paused—the grandeur of his imperious air fading gradually away, like the declining glories of an evening sky, as all their lustre melts in the solemn tints of twilight. His eyes fell to the earth, and a cast of meekness subdued the fire of their glance, and smoothed the lowering furrow of his close-knit brow.

"Prince," he added, "thou didst ask me, who I am.—I am a Christian Missionary, lowly and poor, who wandered from a distant land, to spread the truth my soul adores, to do what good I can, and still to

live in peace and Christian love with thee and all mankind!" He ceased.

Wonder and amazement, shame and disappointment, mingled in the expressive countenance of the Mussulman: he remained silent, alternately directing his glance towards the Missionary, who stood awfully meek and grandly humble before him, and to Luxima, who, faint and almost lifeless, leaned against the trunk of a tree, beaming amidst its dark foliage like a spirit of air, whom the power of enchantment had spell-bound in the dusky shade. The young and ardent Solyman had nothing to oppose to the speech of the Missionary, and offered no reply; but rushing by him, he fell at the feet of the Priestess. "Fair

creature," he said, "knowest thou this wondrous stranger, and has he any influence o'er thy mind? for though I hate him as an infidel, yet I would kneel to him, if he could but move thee in my favour."

"And what wouldst thou of a Brahmin's daughter, and a consecrated vestal?" interrupted the Missionary, trembling with agitation; while Luxima hid her blushing face in her veil.

"I would possess her affections!" returned the impassioned Solyman.

"She has none to bestow," said the Missionary, in a faltering voice; "her soul is wedded to Heaven."

"Perhaps thou lovest her thyself," said the Prince, rising from the feet of Luxima, and darting a searching glance at the Missionary; who replied, while a crimson glow suffused itself even to his brow, "I love her in Christian charity, as I am bound to love all mankind."

"And nothing more?" demanded the Prince, with a piercing look.

"Nothing more?" faintly demanded Luxima, turning on him eyes which melted with tenderness and apprehension, as if her soul hung upon his reply.

"Nothing more!" said the Monk, faintly.

"Swear it then," returned Solyman, while his eyes ran over the anxious countenance of the drooping Neophyte, who stood pale and sad, chasing away with her long hair the tears which swelled to her eyes; "swear it, Christian, by the God you serve."

"And by what compulsion am I to obey thy orders," said the Missionary vehemently, and in unsubdued emotion, "and profane the name of the Most High, by taking it in vain, because a boy desires it?"

"Boy! boy!" reiterated the Prince, his lips quivering with rage; then, suddenly recovering himself, he waved his head, and smiled contemptuously; and turning his eyes

on Luxima, whose loveliness became more attractive from the tender emotion of her varying countenance, he said, "Beautiful Hindu! it is now for thee to decide! Haply thou knowest this Christian; perhaps thou lovest him! as it is most certain that he loves thee. I also love thee: judge then between us. With me thou mayst one day reign upon the throne of India, and yet become the empress of thine own people; what he can proffer thee, besides his love, I know not."

"Besides his love!" faintly repeated Luxima; and a sigh, which came from her heart, lingered long and trembling on her lips, while she turned her full eyes upon the Missionary.

"Ah! thou lovest him then?" demanded the Prince, in strong and unsubdued emotion.

"It is my religion now to do so," replied the Indian, trembling and covered with blushes; and chasing away her timid tears, she added faintly, "Heaven has spoken through his lips to my soul."

A long pause ensued; the eyes of each seemed studiously turned from the other; and all were alike engrossed by their own secret emotions. Solyman was the first to terminate a silence almost awful.

"Unfortunate Indian!" exclaimed the Prince, with a look of mingled anger and compassion; "thou art

then a Christian, and an apostate from thy religion, and must *forfeit cast*."

At this denunciation, so dreadful, Luxima uttered a shriek, and fell at his feet, pale, trembling, and in disorder. "Mercy!" she exclaimed, "mercy! recall those dreadful words. Oh! I am not a Christian! not *all* a Christian! His God indeed is mine; but Brahma still receives my homage: I am still his Priestess, and bound by holy vows to serve him; then save me from my nation's dreadful curse. It is in thy power only to draw it on my head: for here, hidden from all human eyes, I listen to the precepts of this holy man, in innocence and truth."

The Prince gazed on her for a moment, lovely as she lay at his feet, in softness and in tears; then concealing his face in his robe, he seemed for some time to struggle with himself; at last he exclaimed, "Unhappy Indian, thou hast my pity! and if from others thou hast nought to hope, from me thou hast nought to fear." Again he paused and sighed profoundly; and then, in a low voice, added, "Farewell! Though I have but thrice beheld thy peerless beauty, I would have placed the universe at thy feet, had I been its master; but the son of the royal Daara cannot deign to struggle, in unequal rivalship, with an obscure and unknown Christian wanderer. Yet still remember, should the imprudence of thy Christian lover expose

thee to the rage of Brahminical intolerance; or thy apostacy call down thy nation's wrath upon thy head; or should aught else endanger thee; seek me where thou mayest, I promise thee protection and defence." Then, without directing a glance at the Missionary, he moved with dignity away; and mounting a Tartar horse, whose bridle was thrown over the trunk of a distant tree, he was in a moment out of sight.

The Missionary, overwhelmed, as if for the first time his secret were revealed even to himself, stood transfixed in the attitude in which the Prince's last speech had left him; his arms were folded in the dark drapery of his robe; his eyes cast to the earth; and in his counte-

nance were mingled expressions of shame and triumph, of passion and remorse, of joy and apprehension. Luxima too remained in the suppliant attitude in which she had thrown herself at the Prince's feet; not daring to raise those eyes in which a thousand opposite expressions blended their rays. Solyman had called the Missionary her *lover*; and this epithet, by a strange contrariety of feeling and of prejudice, at once human and divine, religious and tender, filled her ardent soul with joy and with remorse. The affectionate, the impassioned woman triumphed; but the pure, the consecrated vestal shuddered; and though she still believed her own feelings resembled the pious tenderness of *mystic love*, yet she trembled to

expose them even to herself, and remained buried in confusion and in shame. A long and awful pause ensued, and the silent softness of the twilight no longer echoed the faintest sound; all around resembled the still repose of nature, ere the eternal breath had warmed it into life and animation; but all within the souls of the solitary tenants of shades so tranquil was tumult and agitation. At last, Luxima, creeping towards the Missionary, in a faint and tender voice, pronounced the dear and sacred epithet of "Father!" He started at the sound, and, turning away his head, sighed profoundly. "Look on me," said Luxima, timidly; "it is thy child, thy proselyte, who kneels at thy feet; the wrath of Heaven is

about to fall heavily on her head; the gods she has abandoned are armed against her; and the Heaven, to which thou hast lured the apostate, opens not to receive and to protect her." She took the drapery of his robe as she spoke, and wept in its folds. She was struck to the soul by the cold resistance of his manner; and beholding not the passions which convulsed his countenance, she guessed not at those which agitated his mind. The instinctive tenderness and delicacy of a woman, whose secret has escaped her, ere an equal confidence has sanctioned the avowal of her love, was deeply wounded; and not knowing that man, who has so little power over the mere impulse of passion, could subdue, confine, and resist the expressions of

his sentiments, she believed that the unguarded discovery of her own feelings had awakened the abhorrence of a soul so pure and so abstracted as the Christian's; and, after a pause, which sighs only interrupted, she added, "And have I also sinned against thee, for whose sake I have dared the wrath of the gods of my fathers; and, in declaring the existence of that divine love, enchanting and sublime, which thou hast taught me to feel, that mysterious pledge for the assurance of heavenly bliss, by which an object on earth, precious and united, yet distinct from our own soul, can——"

"Luxima! Luxima!" interrupted he, in wild and uncontrollable emotion, nor daring to meet the look

which accompanied words so dangerous, "cease, as you value my eternal happiness. You know not what you do, nor what you say. You are confounding ideas which should be eternally distinct and separate: you deceive yourself, and you destroy me! The innocence of your nature, your years, your sex, the purity of your feelings, and your soul, must save you; but I! I!—Fatal creature! it must not be! Farewell, Luxima!—O Luxima! on earth at least we meet no more!" As he spoke, he disengaged his hand from the clasp of hers, and would have fled.

"Hear me," she said, in a faltering voice, and clinging to his robe; "hear me! and then let me die!"

The Missionary heard and shuddered: he knew that the idea of death was ever welcome to an Indian's mind; and, that the crime of suicide to which despair might urge its victim, was sanctioned by the religion of the country, by its customs and its laws*. He paused, he trembled, and turning slowly round, fearfully beheld almost lifeless at his feet, the young, the innocent, and lovely woman, who, for his sake, had refused a throne; who, for his sake, was ready to embrace death. "Let you die, Luxima?" he repeated, in a softened voice; and seating himself

* To quit life, before it quits them, is among the Hindus no uncommon act of heroism; and this fatal custom arises from their doctrine of metempsychosis, in which the faith of all the various casts is equally implicit.

on a bank beside her, he chased away with her veil, the tears which hung trembling on her faded cheek —"Let you die?"

"And wherefore should I live?" she replied with a sigh. "Thou hast torn from me the solace of my own religion; and, when I lose thee, when I no longer look upon or hear thee, who can promise that the faith, to which thou hast won me from the altars of my ancient gods, will remain to sooth my suffering soul? and, O father! though it should, must I worship alone and secretly, amidst my kindred and my friends; or, must I, by a public profession of apostacy, lose my cast, and wander wretched and an alien in distant wilds, my

nation's curse and shame? Oh! no; 't were best, ere that, I died! for now I shall become a link between thy soul and a better, purer state of things; spotless and unpolluted, I shall reach the realms of peace, and a part of thyself will have gone before thee to the bosom of that great Spirit, of which we are alike emanations. O father!" she added, with a mixture of despair and passion in her look and voice, "'t were best that *now* I died; and that I died for *thee*."

"For me, Luxima! for me!" repeated the Missionary, in a frenzied accent, and borne away by a variety of contending and powerful emotions—"die for me! and yet it is denied *me* even to *live* for thee!—

And live I not for thee? O woman! alike fatal and terrific to my senses and my soul, thou hast offered thy life as a purchase of my secret—and it is thine! Now then, behold prostrate at thy feet, one who, till this dreadful moment, never bent his knee to ought but God alone; behold, thus grovelling on the earth, the destruction thou hast effected, the ruin thou hast made! behold the unfortunate, whose force has submitted to thy weakness; whom thou hast dragged from the proudest eminence of sanctity and virtue, to receive the law of his existence from thy look, the hope of his felicity from thy smile; for know, frail as thou mayst be, in all thy fatal fondness, he is frailer still; and that thou, who lovest with all a

seraph's purity, art beloved with all the sinful tyranny of human passion, strengthened by restraint, and energized by being combated. Now then, all consecrated as thou art to heaven; all pure and vestal by thy vows and life; save, if thou canst, the wretch whom thou hast made; for, lost alike to heaven and to himself, he looks alone *to thee* for his redemption!" As he spoke, he fell prostrate and almost lifeless on the earth: for two days no food had passed his lips; for two nights no sleep had closed his eyes; passion and honour, religion and love, opposed their conflicts in his mind; nature sunk beneath the struggle, and he lay lifeless at the feet of her who had for ever destroyed the tranquillity of his conscience, and

rendered valueless the sacrifices of his hitherto pure, sinless, and self-denying life.

Luxima, trembling and terrified, yet blessed in her sufferings, and energized by those strong affections which open an infinite resource to woman in the hour of her trial, gently raised his head from the earth and chafed his forehead with the drops which a neighbouring lotos-leaf had treasured from the dews of the morning. He loved her; he had told her so; and she again repeated in her felicity, as she had done in her despair, "It were best that now I died!"

CHAPTER XI.

Slowly restored to a perfect consciousness of his situation; to a recollection of the fatal avowal, by which he had irretrievably committed himself, and of the singular event which had produced it; the Missionary still lay motionless and silent; still lay supported by the Neophyte which love alone had given him. He dreaded a recovery from the partial suspension of all his higher faculties; he shrank from the obtrusive admonitions of reason and religion, and sought to perpetuate an apparent state of insensibi-

lity, which gave him up to the indulgence of a passive but gracious feeling, scarcely accompanied by any positive perception, and resembling, in its nature and influence, some confused but delightful dream, which, while it leaves its pleasurable impression on the senses, defies the accuracy of memory to recall or to arrange it. His heart now throbbed lightly, for it was disburdened of its fatal secret; his mind reposed from its conflicts, for it had passed the crisis of its weakness in betraying it: he felt the tears of love on his brow; he felt an affectionate hand returning the pressure of his; and a sense of a sacred communion, which identified the soul of another with his own, possessed itself of his

whole being; and passion was purified by an intelligence which seemed to belong alone to mind. Alive to feelings more acute, to a sensibility more exquisite, than he had hitherto known; all external objects faded from his view for the moment; life was to him a series of ideas and feelings, of affections and emotions: he sought to retain no consciousness, but that of loving and being loved; and if he was absorbed in illusion, it was an illusion which, though reason condemned, innocence still ennobled and consecrated.

Luxima hung over him in silence, and her countenance was the reflection of all the various emotions which flitted over his. The repose

which smoothed his brow, communicated to hers its mild and tranquil expression; her pulse quickened to the increasing throb of his temples; and the vital hues which revisited his cheek, rosed hers with the bright suffusion of love and hope. Fearing almost for his life, she bowed her head to catch the low-drawn respiration, and returned every breath of renovating existence with a sigh of increasing joy.

"Luxima!" said a voice, which, though low and tremulous, reached her inmost soul.

"I am here, father!" she replied in emotion, and bashfully withdrawing her arm from beneath a head which no longer needed support.

The Missionary took the hand thus withdrawn, and pressed it, for the first time, to his lips. The modest eyes of the vestal Priestess sank beneath the look which accompanied the tender act: it was the first look of love acknowledged and returned; it penetrated and mingled itself with the very existence of her to whom it was directed; it resembled, in its absorbing and delicious influence, the ecstacy of enthusiasm, which, in the days of her religious illusion, descended on her spirit to kindle and to entrance it; which had once formed the inspiration of the Prophetess, and animated beyond the charms of human beauty the loveliness of the woman. Turning away her glance in timid disorder, she sought for resource

against herself in the objects which encompassed her: she threw up her eyes to that heaven, to whose exclusive love she had once devoted herself, and, from a sudden association of ideas, she turned them to the mouldering altar of the god whose service she had abandoned. The religion of her spirit and of her senses, of truth and error, alike returned with all their influence on her soul; and she shuddered as she looked on the shrine where she had once worshipped with a pure, pious, and undivided feeling: the moonlight fell in broken rays upon its shining fragments, and formed a strong relief to their lustre in the massive foliage of a dark tree which shaded it. The air was breathless, and the branches of this consecrated

and gigantic tree alone were agitated; they waved with a slow but perceptible undulation; the fearful eyes of the apostate pursued their mysterious motion, which seemed influenced by no external cause: they bowed, they separated, and through their hitherto impervious darkness gleamed the vision of a human countenance! if human it might be called; which gave the perfect image of Brahma, as he is represented in the *Avatar* of "the Destroyer." It vanished—the moon sank in clouds—the vision lasted but a moment; but that moment for ever decided the fate of the Priestess of Cashmire! Luxima saw no more—with a loud and piercing shriek she fell prostrate on the earth.

The Missionary started in horror and amazement; the form which now lay pale and lifeless at his feet, had, an instant before, by its animated beauty rivetted his eyes, absorbed his thoughts, and engrossed his exclusive attention, as half-averted, half-reposing in his arms, it had mingled in its expression and its attitude the tender confidence of innocence and love, the dignified reserve of modesty and virtue; still seeing no object but herself, he remained ignorant of the cause of her emotion, and was overwhelmed by its effects. He trembled with a selfish fondness for a life on which his happiness, his very existence, now depended: he raised her in his arms; he murmured on her ear words of peace and love. He threw back her long

dark tresses, that the air might play freely on her face; and he only withdrew his anxious looks from the beauty of her pale and motionless countenance, to try if he could discover, in the surrounding scene, any cause for a transition of feeling so extraordinary; but nothing appeared which could change happiness into horror, which could tend to still the pulse of love in the throbbing heart, or bleach its crimson hue upon the glowing cheek. The moon had again risen in cloudless majesty, rendering the minutest blossom visible: the stillness of the air was so profound, that he faintest sigh was heard in dying echoes. All was boundless solitude and soothing silence. The mystery, therefore,

of Luxima's sudden distraction was unfathomable. She still lay motionless on the shoulder of the Missionary; but the convulsive starts, which at intervals shook her frame, the broken sighs which fluttered on her lips, betrayed the return of life and consciousness. "Luxima!" exclaimed the Missionary, pressing the cold hands he held; "Luxima, what means this heart-rending, this fearful emotion? Look at me! Speak to me! Let me again meet thine eye, and hang upon thy voice—fatal eye and fatal voice—my destruction and my felicity! still I woo and fear the return of their magic influence. Luxima, if Heaven forbids our communion in happiness, does it also deny us a sympathy in sorrow? Art thou to suffer

alone? or rather, are my miseries to be doubled in my ignorance of thine? Oh! my beloved, if conscience speak in words of terror to thy soul, what has not mine to fear? It is I, I alone, who should be miserable in being weak. Created to feel, thou dost but fulfil thy destiny, and in thee nature contemns the false vow by which superstition bound thee to thy imaginary god. In thee it is no crime to love! in me, it is what I abhor no less than crime—it is sin, it is shame, it is weakness. It is I alone who should weep and tremble; it is I alone who have fallen, and whose misery and whose debasement demand pity and support. Speak to me then, my too well beloved disciple; solace me by

words, for thy looks are terrific. O Luxima! give me back that soft sweet illusion, which thy voice of terror dissipated, or take from me its remembrance; give me up at once to reason and to remorse, or bid me, with one look of love, renounce both for ever at thy feet, and I will obey thee! I!—Redeemer of the World! hast thou then quite forsaken him whom thou didst die to save? Is the bearer of thy cross, is the minister of thy word, abandoned by his Saviour? Is he so steeped in misery and sin, that the spirit, which thy grace once enlightened, dares not lift itself to thee, and cry for mercy and salvation? Is the soul, which was tempted to error in its zeal for thy cause, to sink into the endless night prepared for the guilty? Wo-

man! fiend! whatever thou art, who thus by the seeming ways of Heaven leadest me to perdition, leave me! fly me! loose thy fatal hold on my heart, while yet the guilty passions, which brood there, have made me criminal in thought alone."

Luxima shuddered; she raised her drooping head from the bosom which recoiled from supporting her, and she fixed on the agitated countenance of the Monk a look, tender, and reproachful, even through the expression of horror and remore, which darkened its softness and its lustre. This look had all its full effect; but Luxima shrunk back from the arms which again involuntarily extended to receive and to support her; and, in a

solemn and expressive voice, she said, "It is all over!—ere that orb shall have performed its nightly course we shall be *parted for ever!*"

The Missionary was silent, but horror and consternation were in his looks.

Luxima threw round her a wild and timid glance; then creeping toward him, she said, in a low whispering voice, "Sawest thou nothing, some few minutes back, which froze thy blood, and harrowed up thy soul?"

"Nothing," he replied, watching, in strong emotion, the sad wild expression of her countenance.

"That is strange," she returned, with a deep sigh, "most strange!" Then, after a pause, she demanded, with a vacant look, "Where are we, father?"

"Luxima! Luxima!" he exclaimed, gazing on her in fear and in amazement, "what means this sudden, this terrific change? Merciful Heaven! does thy mind wander; or hast thou quite forgotten thine own consecrated shades, the '*confluence 'of the streams,*' where first the Christian Missionary addressed the Priestess of Brahma? Hast thou forgotten the altar of thy once worshipped god?"

At these words, emphatically pronounced, to steady her wavering

recollection, lightning from heaven seemed to fall upon the head of the apostate Priestess; her limbs were convulsed, her complexion grew livid, she threw her eyes wildly round her, and murmuring, in a low quick voice, a Brahminical invocation, she sprung forward with rapid bound, and fell prostrate before the shrine of her former idol. There the Christian dared not follow her: he arose, and advanced a few steps, and paused, and gazed; then, wringing his hands in agony, he said, "Happy in her illusion, she returns to her false gods for support and comfort, while I, debased and humbled, dare not raise my eyes and heart in supplications to the God of Truth." As he spoke, he cast a look on the cross, which hung from his rosary;

but it was still humid with tears, which love had shed, it still breathed the odours of the tresses the wind had wafted on its consecrated surface. He shuddered, and let it fall, and groaned, and covered his eyes with his robe, as if he sought to shut out the light of the Heaven he had offended. When again he raised his head, he perceived that Luxima was moving slowly towards him, not, as she had left him, in delirium, and in tears; but in all the dazzling lustre of some newly-awakened enthusiasm; resembling in her motions and her look the brilliant, the blooming, the inspired Prophetess, who had first disturbed his imagination and agitated his mind, in the groves of Lahore; extending her right hand to forbid his approach,

she paused and leaned on the branch of a blasted tree, with all the awful majesty of one who believed herself fresh from a communion with a celestial being, and irradiated with the reflection of his glory. "Christian!" she said, after a long pause, "the crisis of human weakness is past, and the powers of the immortal spirit assert themselves:—Heaven has interposed to save its faithless servant, and she is prepared to obey its mandate: a divine hand has extended itself to snatch her from perdition, and she refuses not its aid. Christian! the hour of sacrifice is arrived—Farewell. Go! while yet thou mayest go, in innocence; while yet the arm of eternal destruction has not reached thee. O Christian! dangerous and fatal!

while yet I have breath and power to bid thee depart, leave me! The light of the great Spirit has revisited my soul. Even now I am myself become a *part of the Divinity.*" As she spoke, her eyes were thrown up, and the whites only were visible; a slight convulsive smile gleamed across her features; and she passed her right hand from her bosom to her forehead with a slow movement. This mysterious act seemed to bestow upon her a new sense of existence *. Her religious ecstacy slowly subsided—her eyes fell—the colour revisited her cheek

* This mystery is called the *Matricha-machom.* The Brahmins believe that the soul is thus conducted to the brain, and that the spirit is re-united to the Supreme Being.

—she sighed profoundly, and after a silent pause, she said,

"Christian, thou hast witnessed my re-union to the source of my spiritual being. Oppose not thyself to the Heaven, which opens to receive me: depart from me; leave me now—and for ever."

"Luxima," interrupted the Missionary, in the low wild accent of terror and amazement; and perceiving that some delirium of religious fanaticism had seized her imagination—"Luxima, what means this wondrous resolution, this sudden change? Are all our powers alike reversed? Hast thou risen above humanity, or have I fallen below it? And art thou, the sole cause

of all my weakness and my shame, to rise upon the ruin thou hast made, to triumph upon the destruction thou hast effected? Part with me now! abandon me in a moment such as this! O Luxima," he added, with tenderness and passion, and in a voice soft and imploring, "am I deceived, or do you love me?"

Luxima replied not, but her whole countenance and form changed their expression: she no longer looked like an inspired sibyl, borne away by the illusions of her own disordered imagination, but like a tender and devoted woman. She advanced; she fell at his feet, and kissed with humility and passion the hem of his robe; but when he would have raised her in his arms, she recoiled

from his support, and seating herself on a bank, at a little distance from him, she wept. He approached, and stood near her: he saw in the rapid transitions of her manner, and her conduct, the violent struggles of feeling and opinion, the ceaseless conflicts of love and superstition; he saw imaged in her emotions the contending passions which shook him to dissolution. He sighed heavily, and mentally exclaimed,

"Alas! her virtue derives more strength even from error, than mine from truth: she obeys her ideas of right as a Brahmin; I, as a Christian, violate and forsake mine." He turned his eyes on Luxima, and perceived that she was now gazing with a look of exquisite fondness on

him, tempered with something of melancholy and sadness.

"It is hard," said she, "to look on thee, and yet to part with thee! but who will dare to disobey the mandate of a *God*, who comes in his *own presence to save and to redeem us?*"

"What mean you, Luxima?" interrupted the Missionary, in emotion, and throwing himself beside her.

"Hear me," she returned; "*believe*, and *obey*.—From the moment I first beheld thee, first listened to thee, I have ceased to be myself; thy looks, thy words, encompassed me on every side; it seemed as if my soul had anticipated its future

fate, and already fled to accomplish it in thee. I felt that, in ceasing to be near thee, I should cease to exist: therefore I concealed from thee the danger which hung upon our interviews, and all that might lead thee, for thine own sake or for mine, to withdraw from me the heaven of thy presence—but the dream is over! the God whom thou didst teach me to abandon, has this night appeared on earth to reclaim his apostate."

"Luxima! Luxima!"

"Hear me, father! If I live, this night the vision of Brahma, the God whom I forsook, appeared to me amidst the ruins of his own neglected altar!"

"Impossible! impossible!" exclaimed the Missionary vehemently.

. . . . . .

"Then," she returned, in a voice which resembled the heart-piercing accent of melancholy madness, "then there lives some human testimony of our interview, and thou art lost! thou, my soul's own idol! Oh! then, fly—for ever fly: let me feel death and shame but once, and not a thousand, thousand times through thy destruction. But, no," she added in a calmer tone; "it was no human form I saw; I have oft before met that awful vision in my dream of inspiration! haply it came to warn me of thy danger, and to save *my* life through *thine*—then go, leave me while yet I have power to say—*leave me!*"

The Missionary heard her in uncontrolled emotion; but without any faith in a fancied event, which he deemed but the vision of her own disordered imagination, influenced by the agitation of her feelings, by the hour, the scene, and by the fanaticism and superstitious horrors which still governed her vacillating mind: but he saw that there was evidently, at that moment, an obstinacy in her illusion, a bigotry in her faith, it would be vain to attempt to dissipate or to vanquish, until a calmer mood of thought and feeling should succeed to their present tumultuous and unsettled state. Less surprised at the nature of her vision, than at the peculiar result of its influence, he could not comprehend the miracle

by which she submitted to an eternal separation, at a moment when his mind, broken and enervated, sunk under the tyranny of a passion which had just reached its acmé. But he knew love only as a man, and could not comprehend its nature in the heart of a woman:—with him the existing moment was every thing, but her affection took eternity itself into its compass; and though she could have more easily parted with her life than with her lover, yet she did not hesitate to sacrifice her felicity to his safety, to his glory, and to the hope of that eternal reunion which might await two souls, which crime had not yet degraded; for her tolerant, but zealous, religion, shut not the gates of Heaven against all who sought it by a dif-

ferent path; and consecrating a human feeling, in ascribing to it an immortal duration, love itself enabled her to make the sacrifice religion demanded. The Missionary sought not to subdue the influence of that wild and fervid imagination, which now, he believed, held the ascendant; but he sought to combat the resolution it had given birth to—and gazing on a countenance, where the enthusiasm of religion still mingled with the expressions of tenderness and passion, he said,

"Wondrous and powerful being! equally fatal in thy weakness and thy force, in thy seducing softness, and resisting virtue: wilt thou now, thus suddenly, thus unprepared,

abandon me?—now, that thou hast trampled on my religion and my vows; now, that thou hast conquered my habits of feeling, my principles of thinking, subdued every faculty of my being to thy influence, and bereft me of all, save that long latent power of loving passionately — that tyrannic and dreadful capability of an exclusive devotion to a creature frail and perishable as myself, by which thou hast effected my ruin, and changed the very constitution of my nature?"

"Oh, no!" returned Luxima, endeavouring to conceal her tenderness and her tears; "oh, no! Part we cannot. Go where thou mayest, my life must still hang upon thine! my thoughts will pursue thee. Indisso-

lubly united, there is now but one soul between us. But, O father! to preserve that soul pure and untainted — the human intercourse, that dear and fatal symbol of our eternal union, ought, and can, no longer exist; the voice of God and the law of man, alike oppose it: let us not further provoke the wrath of both, let us remember our respective vows, and immolate ourselves to their performance." She arose as she spoke. The tears stood trembling in her inflamed eyes, and that deadly sickness of the soul which ushers in the moment of separation from all the heart holds dearest, spread its livid hues over her cheek, its agony of expression over her countenance.

"Woman! woman!" exclaimed the Missionary, wildly, and seizing

her trembling hands, "give me back my peace, or remain to solace me for its loss; give me back to the Heaven from which you have torn me, or stay, stay, and teach me to forget the virtue by which I earned its protection. While yet a dreadful remembrance of my former self remains, you dare not leave me to horror and remorse! You dare not, cold, or cruel, or faithless, as you may be, you dare not say, 'This 'moment is our last.' O Luxima! Luxima!"—Overcome by a sense of his weakness, he drooped his head upon her hands, and wept. Had not the salvation of his life been the purchase of her firmness and her resistance, Luxima would have granted to the tears of love, what its ardour or its eloquence could

now have obtained: but she knew the danger of remaining longer, or of again meeting him in a place, where they had either been discovered by the jealous guardians of her rigid order, or from which they had been warned by a divine intimation. Mingling her tears with his, after an affecting pause, she said, in a low voice, and scarcely articulate from contending emotions,

"To-morrow, then, we shall again meet, when the sun sets behind the mountains: but not here—not here! Oh, no! These shades have become fearful and full of danger to my imagination. But if thou wilt repair to the western arcades of the great banyan-tree, then——" The words died away on her trembling

lips, and she cast round a wild and timid look, as if some minister of Heaven's mercy was near to forbid an appointment, which might be, perhaps, pregnant with destruction to both.

"*And then*," repeated the Missionary, with vehemence and with firmness, "we meet to part *for ever!* —or—*to part no more!*"

Luxima, at these words, turned her eyes on him, with a look of love, passionate and despairing—then, folding her hands upon her bosom, she raised those eloquent eyes to Heaven, with a glance of sweet and holy resignation to its will. This seraph look of suffering and piety operated like a spell upon

the frantic feelings of her lover. The arms, extended to detain her, fell back nerveless on his breast. He saw her move slowly away, resembling the pensive spirit of some innocent sufferer, whom sorrow had released from the bondage of painful existence. He saw her light and perfect form, faintly tinged with the moon-ray, slowly fading into distance, till it seemed to mingle with the fleecy vapours of the night: then he felt as if she had disappeared from his eyes for ever, and, turning to her image in his heart, he gave himself up to suffering and to thought, to the alternate influence of passion and remorse.

CHAPTER XII.

The habit of suffering brings not always with it the power of endurance; the nerves, too frequently acted on, become morbid and less capable of sustaining the pressure of a reiterated sensation; and the mind, no longer able to support or to resist a protracted conflict, sinks under its oppression, or by some natural impulse abandons the object of its painful cogitation, and finds relief in the effort of seeking change.

The Missionary had reached the crisis of passion, the feverish pa-

roxysm of long-combatted emotions. He had reached the utmost limits of human temptation and human resistance, and shuddered at the risk he had run and the peril he had escaped. He resembled a wanderer in an unknown land, who reaches a towering and fearful eminence; who beholds at a single glance the dangers he has passed, and those he has still to encounter; and who endeavours to regulate his future course by the inferences of his past experience. That wild delirium of the senses which left him an unpractised victim to their tyranny, subsided in some degree with the absence of that tender and enchanting object who distanced all that his fancy had ever dared to picture of woman's loveliness or woman's love; and his mind, comparatively enabled

to think and to decide, with something of its former tone and vigour, gave itself up to a meditation which had for its subject the consequences of that fatal avowal by which he had so irretrievably committed his character and his profession. The mysterious veil which the cold pure hand of religion had flung over his feelings, was now for ever withdrawn, and the frailties of a being once deemed infallible, the passions and weaknesses incidental to his nature as being human, were not only exposed to himself, but were betrayed to others; and to the followers of Brahma and Mahomet, the apostle of Christianity appeared alike frail, alike subdued by passion and open to temptation, as he on whom the light of revealed truth has never beamed. He felt that he had dis-

honoured the religion he professed, by making no application of its principles to his conduct in the only instance in which his virtue had been put to a severe test; and that the doctrine of opinion had failed practically in its influence upon the interests and feelings of self-love. He could no longer conceal from his awakened conscience, that the proselyte his zeal had sought for Heaven, had become the object of a human passion; of a passion, imprudent in the eye of reason, criminal in the eye of religion; and which, in its nature and consequences, was scarcely referable to any order, or to any state of society; for, by the doctrines of their respective religions, by the laws and customs of their respective countries, they could never be united by those ve-

nerated and holy ties, which regulate and cement the finest bonds of humanity, and which obtain from mankind, in all regions of the earth, respect and sanction, as being founded in one of the great moral laws of nature's own eternal code. No Brahmin priest could consecrate an union, sacrilegious according to his habits of thinking and believing. No Christian minister could bless an alliance formed upon the violation of vows solemnly pledged before the altar of the Christian's God. If, therefore, human opinion was of moment to one, whose secret ambition to obtain its favour had rendered even *religion* subservient to its purpose; if the habits, the principles, and the faith of a whole life, held any power over conduct and action in a particular

instance; if self-estimation were necessary to the self-love of a proud and lofty character, between the Christian Priest and Heathen Priestess was placed an insuperable bar, which if once removed, risked their exposure to infamy and to shame in this world, and offered, according to their respective creeds, eternal suffering in the next. But the alternative was scarce less dreadful. In the first instance it was deemed impossible, for it was immediate and eternal separation! Reason dictated, religion commanded, even love itself, influenced by pity, admitted the terrific necessity. Yet still passion and nature struggled, and resisted, with an energy and an eloquence, to which the heart, the imagination, and the senses, devotedly listened. Oh! it

is long, very long, before the strongest mind, in obedience to the dictates of prudence and of pride, can dismiss from its thoughts the object of an habitual meditation, before it can strike out some new line of existence, foreign to its most cherished sentiments and dearest views. It is long, very long, before we can look calmly into the deserted heart, and behold unmoved a dreary void, where late some image erected by our hopes, filled from the source of pleasure, every artery with the tide of gladness. It is difficult for human reason to argue away passion, by cold and abstract principles, and to substitute the torpor of indifference for the pang of disappointment; but it is still more difficult for human fortitude, though actuated by the highest hu-

man virtue, to tear asunder the ties of love, in all their force and vigour, ere habit may have softened their strength, or satiety relaxed their tension. To effect this sudden breaking up of the affections, ere they have been suffered gently to moulder away in the mild and sure decay of consuming time, the silent, certain progress of mortal oblivion, some power more than human is requisite.

On the luxurious shores of the confluence of the streams, with the light of heaven dying softly round them, the air breathing enjoyment, and the earth affording it, the stoicism of the man would not perhaps have continued proof against the charms of the woman. But in darkness, in solitude, and in silence, in a cavern cold and gloomy, religion

borrowed a superadded influence from the impression of the senses; and at the foot of the cross, raised by his own hands in the land of the unbelieving, and faintly illuminated by the chill pure rays of an approaching dawn, that season of the day so solemn and so impressive, when passion slumbers, and visions of fear and gloom steal upon the soul, did the Christian Missionary vow to resign for ever, the object of the only human weakness which had disgraced his sinless life. The vow had passed his lips; it was registered in heaven; and nature almost sunk beneath the sacrifice which religion had exacted.

The great immolation resolved on, all that now remained to be effected,

was to fly from a spot which he had found so fatal to his pious views, and to pursue the holy cause of the Mission in regions more favourable to its success; but the energy of zeal was subdued or blunted, and a complexional enthusiasm, once solely directed to the interests of Christianity, had now found another medium for its ardour and activity. Scarcely knowing whither to direct his steps, he mechanically inquired from a Goala, whom kindness that morning brought to his grotto with some fruit, the road, which at that season, the caravan passing through Cashmire from Thibet, usually took. The information he received tended to facilitate his departure from Cashmire, for the caravan had halted in the district of Sirinagur.

To behold Luxima for the last time was now all that remained! But the feelings of tenderness and despair, with which this trying interview was contemplated, plunged him in all the pangs of irresolution; vibrating between desire and fear, between the horror of leaving her, unprepared and unexpecting their eternal separation, or of beholding her in love and in affliction, expressing in her beautiful and eloquent countenance, the agony of that tender and suffering heart which, but for him, had still been the asylum of peace and happiness.

At last, a day of conflict and of misery, alternately devoted to an heavenly and to an earthly object, now passed in tenderness and grief,

and now in supplication and in prayer, hastened to its conclusion! The sun had set—a few golden rays still lingered in the horizon, and found a bright reflection on the snows which covered the mountains of Thibet. It was the hour of *the appointed interview!* The Christian prostrated himself for the last time before the altar, and invoked the protection of Heaven to support him through the most trying effort of his life; to subdue the hidden "man of the heart," and, upon the ruins of a frail and earthly passion, to raise a sentiment of hope and faith, which should point alone to that eternal recompense reserved for those who suffer and who sustain, who are tempted and who resist. He arose, sublimed and tranquillized, from the foot of the altar. Religion encompass-

ed him with her shield, and poured her spirit on his soul. He took from the altar the Scriptural volume, and placed it on his bosom; and grasping in his right hand the pastoral crosier, he paused for a moment, and gazed around him; then proceeding with a rapid step, he passed, for the last time, the rude threshold of a place which had afforded him so sweet and so fatal an asylum, which had so often re-echoed to his sighs of passion, and resounded to his groans of penitence. Yet once again he paused, and cast back his eyes upon this beloved grotto: but the faded wreath of the Indian Priestess, suspended from one of its projections, caught his glance. He shuddered. This simple object was fatal to his resolutions—it brought

to his heart the recollection of love's delicious dawn; the various eras of its successive and blissful emotions. But he wished to meet *her*, on whose brow this frail memento had once exhausted its odours and its bloom, as he had first met her, with eyes so cold, and thoughts so pure and so free from human taint, that even Religion's self might say, "A communion such as this belongs to Heaven!" Yet he withdrew his eyes with a long and lingering look, and sighed profoundly as he retreated. He reached the arcade of the banyans, as the sunbeam reflected from the mountains threw its last light on a dark bower of branches, beneath whose shade he beheld the Indian Neophyte. She was kneeling on the earth, pale, and much changed in

her appearance, and seemingly invoking the assistance of Heaven with fervid devotion. No consecrated flower bloomed amidst the dark redundancy of her neglected tresses. No transparent drapery shadowed, with folds of snow, the outlines of her perfect form: her hair, loose and dishevelled, hung in disorder round her; and she was habited in the dress of a Chancalas, or *outcast*—a habit coarse and rude, and calculated to resist the vicissitude of climate to which such unhappy wanderers are exposed. A linen veil partly shaded her head: her muntras were fastened round her arm with an idol figure of Camdeo: from the dsandam which encircled her neck, was suspended a small cross, given to her by the Mis-

sionary; and those symbols of faith and of idolatry expressed the undecided state of her mind and feelings, which *truth* taught by *love*, and *error* confirmed by *habit*, still divided —equally resembling in her look, her dress, and air, a Christian Magdalene, or a penitent Priestess of Brahma.

In this object, so sad and so touching, nothing appeared to change the resolutions of the Missionary, but much to confirm them. It was a fine image of the conquest of virtue over passion — and the most tender of women seemed to set a bright example to the firmest of men. Yet, when Luxima beheld him, a faint colour suffused her cheek, her whole frame thrilled

with obvious emotion. She arose, and extended her trembling hand—but he took it not; for her appearance awakened sensations of love and melancholy, which, when they mingle, are of all others the most profound; and casting down his eyes, he said,

"I am come, my daughter, in obedience to thy commands, to behold thee for the last time, and to give thee up exclusively to Him, whose grace may operate upon thy soul, without the wretched aid of one so frail and weak as I have proved. Thou wearest on thy breast, the badge of that pure truth which already dawns upon thy soul. Take also this book—it is all I have to bestow; but it is all-sufficient for

thy eternal happiness." He paused, and the emotion of his countenance but ill accorded with the coldness of his words.

Luxima took the book in silence: something she would have said, but the words died away on her trembling lips; and she raised her eyes to his face, with a look so tender, and yet so despairing, that the Missionary felt how fatal to every resolution he had formed, another such look might prove.

Averting his eyes, therefore, and extending his hands over her head, he would have spoken—he would have blessed her—he would have said, "Farewell for ever!" but the power of articulation had deserted

him. Again he tried to speak, and failed; his lips trembled, his eyes grew dim, his heart sickened, and the agonies of death seemed to convulse his frame. Luxima still clung to his arm. Had the life-blood flowed from her bosom, beneath the sacrificial knife, her countenance could not have expressed more acute anguish. He sought, by a feeble effort, to release himself from her grasp: but he had not power to move; and the mutual glance which mingled their souls at the moment they were about to part for ever, operated with a force they had no longer power to resist. Faint and pale, Luxima sunk on his bosom. At that moment, sounds came confusedly on the winds, and growing louder on

the ear, seemed to pierce the heart of the Indian. She started, she trembled, she listened wildly; and then, with a shriek, exclaimed,

"So soon, so soon, does death overtake me. Now then, now, farewell for ever! Leave me to die, and save thyself!" As she spoke, she would have fallen to the earth, but that the Missionary caught her in his arms. All the powers of life seemed to rush upon him; a vague idea of some dreadful danger which threatened the object of his pity and his love, roused and energized his mind and nerved his frame. He no longer reasoned, he no longer resisted. Obedient only to the impulse of the immediate feeling, he bore away his lifeless charge in his

arms, and plunging into the deepest shades of the banyan, endeavoured to reach a dark pile of towering rocks, whose sharp high points still caught a hue of light from the west, and among whose cavities he hoped to find refuge and concealment. The mists of evening had hid from his view a mighty excavation, which he now entered, and perceived that it was the vestibule of an ancient Pagoda: its roof, glittering with pendent stalactites, was supported by columns, forming a magnificent colonnade, disposed with all the grand irregularity which Nature displays in her greatest works, and reflecting the images of surrounding objects, tinged with the rich and purple shade of evening colouring. This splendid portico opened into

a gloomy and terrific cavern, whose half-illuminated recess formed a striking contrast to the exterior lustre. Pillars of immense magnitude hewn out of the massive rocks, and forming an imperishable part of the whole mighty mass, sustained the ponderous and vaulted ceiling: receding in the perspective, they lost their magnitude in distance, till their lessening forms terminated in dim obscurity, and finely characterized the awful mystery of the impervious gloom. Idols of gigantic stature, colossal forms, hideous and grotesque images, and shrines emblazoned with offerings, and dimly glittering with a dusky lustre, were rudely scattered on every side. For the Missionary had borne the Priestess of Brahma

to the temple in which she herself presided: the most ancient and celebrated in India, after that of Elephanta. This sanctuary of the most awful superstition, worthy of the wildest rites of a dark idolatry, was now wrapt in a gloom, rendered more obvious by the faint blue light which issued from the earth, in a remote part of the cavern, and which seemed to proceed from a subterraneous fire *, which burst

* The vapour of naphtha which issues through the crevices of the earth, is supposed to be the cause of the flame which is sometimes observed in India. At Chittagong is a fountain which bursts into flame, and which has its tutelar deities and presiding priests. When it is purposely extinguished, it rekindles spontaneously.

at intervals into flame, throwing a frightful glare upon objects in themselves terrific.

The Christian shuddered as he gazed around him: but every thought, every feeling of the lover and the man, was soon concentrated to the object still supported in his arms, and who he believed and hoped, in this sad and lonely retreat, had nothing to apprehend from immediate danger. Life again reanimated her frame, but she was weak and faint, and an expression of terror was still marked on her features. He placed her near a pillar, which supported her drooping form, and flew to procure some water from a spring, whose gushing fall echoed among the rocks; when

the sound of solemn music, deep, sad, and sonorous, came upon the wind, which at intervals rushed through the long surrounding aisles of the cavern, disturbing with their hollow murmurs the death-like silence of the place. The Missionary listened: the sounds grew louder; they were no longer prolonged by the wind; they came distinctly on the ear; they were accompanied by the echo of many footsteps; and hues of light thrown on the darkness of the rocks, marked the shadows of an approaching multitude. The Missionary rushed back to his charge: she had raised her head from the earth, and listened with the air of a maniac to the increasing sounds.

"Unfortunate as innocent," he said, encircling her with his extended arms, "there is now, I fear, no refuge left thee but this. O Luxima! thy danger has reunited us, and I am alike prepared to die for or with thee." As he spoke, a blue phosphoric light glanced on the idols near the entrance of the Pagoda: it proceeded from a large silver censer, borne by a venerable Brahmin, who was followed by a procession of the same order, each Brahmin holding in his hand a branch of the gloomy and sacred ocynum, the symbol of the dreadful ceremony of *Brahminical excommunication.* The procession, which passed near the pillar, by whose deep shadow the unfortunate victims who thus had rushed

upon destruction, stood concealed, was closed by the venerable Guru of Cashmire; he was carried in a black palanquin, and his aged countenance was stamped with the impress of despair. The Brahmins circled round the subterraneous fire, each in his turn flinging on its flame the leaves of the sandal-tree and oils of precious odour. The kindling flames discovered on every side, thrones, columns, altars, and images; while the priests, dividing into two bands, stood on each side of the fire, and the Guru took his place in the centre of his disciples.

All now was the silence of death, and the subterraneous fire spread around its ghastly hues: the chief

of the Brahmins, then prostrating himself before the shrine of Vishnu, drew from his breast the volume of the sacred laws of MENU, and read the following decree, in a deep and impressive voice: "Glory be to Vishnu! who thus speaks by the mouth of his Prophet Menu *. He who talks to the wife or the widow of a Brahmin, at a place of pilgrimage, in a consecrated grove, or at the confluence of rivers, incurs the punishment of guilt; the seduction of a guarded Priestess is to be repaid with life: but if she be not only guarded, but eminent for good qualities, he is to be burnt with the fires of divine wrath!" At these

* See translation of the Laws of Menu, by Sir William Jones.

words the solemn roll of the tublea, or drum of condemnation, resounded through the temple; and when the awful sound had died away in melancholy murmurs, two Brahmins coming forward, made their depositions of the guilt of the chief Priestess of the temple. They deposed, that, passing near the sacred grove which led to the pavilion of the Priestess, they observed issuing from its shades the Mogul Prince Solyman—that, induced by their zeal for the purity of their sacred order, they repaired at the same hour on the following evening to the place of her evening worship, where they had discovered the Brachmachira, not indeed as they had expected, with the worshipper of Mahomet, but with a Frangui or Im-

pure, who had already endeavoured to seduce some of the children of Brahma to abandon the God of their fathers; that they found her supporting the infidel in her arms—a circumstance sufficient to confirm every suspicion of her guilt, and to call for her excommunication, or forfeiture of cast. The sanctity, the age and reputation of the Brahmins, gave to their testimony a weight which none dared dispute. It was now only reserved for the Guru to pronounce sentence on his granddaughter. He was supported by two Yogis. A ghastly and livid hue diffused itself over his countenance; and in his despairing look were mingled with the distracted feelings of the doting parent, the superstitious horrors of the zeal-

ous Priest. Thrice he essayed to pronounce that name, hitherto never uttered but with triumph; and to heap curses upon that beloved head, on which blessings and tears of joy had so often fallen together. At last, in a low, trembling, and hollow voice, he said,

"Luxima, the Brachmachira of Cashmire, Chief Priestess of the Pagoda of Sirinagur, and a consecrated vestal of Brahma, having justly forfeited cast, is doomed by the word of Brahma, and the law of Menu, to become a Chancalas, a wanderer, and an outcast upon earth!—with none to pray with her, none to sacrifice with her, none to read with her, and none to speak to her; none to be allied by friendship or by

marriage to her, none to eat, none to drink, and none to pray with her. Abject let her live, excluded from all social duties; let her wander over the earth, deserted by all, trusted by none, by none received with affection, by none treated with confidence—an apostate from her religion, and an alien to her country, branded with the stamp of infamy and of shame, the curse of Heaven and the hatred of all good men *."

The last words died on the lips of him who pronounced them; and the unfortunate grandsire fell lifeless in the arms of his attendants.

* Such is the form of the Indian excommunication.

The conch, or religious shell, was then blown with a blast so shrill and loud, that it resembled the sound of the last trump; the tublea rolled, and was echoed by endless reverberations; hideous shouts of superstitious frenzy mingling their discordant jar, ran along the mighty concave like pealing thunderbolts, until gradually these sounds of terror fainted away in sobbing echoes; and the awful procession departed from the temple to the same solemn strains, in the same order in which it had entered it. All was again silent, awful, and gloomy; like the night which preceded creation, or that which is to follow its destruction. The subterraneous fires still faintly emitted their flame above the surface of the earth, and threw

their mystic light on the brow of the excommunicated Priestess. She lay lifeless on the earth, where she had fallen during the conclusion of the ceremony of her excommunication, with a shriek so loud and piercing, that the horrid crash of sounds, which at that moment filled the Pagoda, could alone have drowned her shrill and plaintive voice, or prevented the discovery of her situation to the ministers of the temple. The Missionary knelt beside her, watching, in breathless agony, the slow departure and fading sounds of the procession. When all was still, he turned his eyes on the Outcast; he saw her lying without life or motion, cold and disfigured, and, save by him alone, abandoned and abhorred by all.

Thus lost, thus fallen, he beheld her in a place where she had once received the homage of a deity: he saw her an innocent and unoffending victim, offered by himself, by his mistaken zeal and imprudent passion, on the altar of a rigid and cruel superstition: his brain maddened as he gazed upon her, for he almost believed her tender heart had broken its life-chords, under the pressure of feelings and sufferings beyond the power of human endurance; and, in this dreadful apprehension, all capability of thought or action alike deserted him. Alike bereaved of reflection or resource, alike destitute of effort or energy, he remained mute, agonized, and gazing on the object of his tenderness and his despair. At last a sigh, soft, yet

convulsive, breathed from the lips of Luxima, and seemed to operate on his frame like electricity: it was a human sound, and it dispelled the dead-like silence of all around him; it was the accent of love and sorrow, and his heart vibrated to its respiration. He raised the sufferer in his arms; he addressed to her soothing murmurs of love and pity, of hope and consolation. At the sound of his voice, she raised her eyes, and gazed, with a look of fear and terror, round her, as if she expected to meet the forms, or to hear the voices, of the awful ministers of her malediction; but the moment which succeeded was cheaply purchased, even by its preceding horrors. She turned back her languid eyes in despair, believing her-

self abandoned alike by Heaven and earth, but she fixed them in transport on him who was now her universe; her whole being received a new impulse from the look which answered to her own.

"Thou art safe! thou art near me!" she exclaimed, in a sobbing accent; and, falling on his shoulder, she wept. Some moments of unbroken silence passed away, devoted to emotions too exquisite and too profound to be imaged by words. Where a true and perfect love exists, there is a melancholy bliss in the sacrifices made for its object; and the tender Indian was now soothed, under her affliction, by the consideration of him for whose sake she had incurred it: for to suf-

fer, or to die, for him she loved, was more precious to her feelings, than even to have enjoyed security and life, independent of his idea, his influence, or his presence. But equal to sustain her own miseries, she was overpowered by the fate which remotely threatened him; and in a moment when her affection rose in proportion to the peril he risked for her sake, she resolved on the last and greatest sacrifice the heart of woman could make to effect his safety, by again urging his flight, and resigning him for ever. Gazing on him, therefore, with a melancholy smile, which love and agony disputed, she said, "My father and my friend! a creature avoided and abhorred by all, labouring under the curse of her nation and the

wrath of Heaven, has no alternative but to submit to a fate, which she can neither avert nor avoid: but for thee, who hast incurred the penalty of a crime, of which thou art innocent, and which thy pure soul abhors, a life of safety and of glory is yet reserved. A law, which seems dictated by cruelty, is always reluctantly executed by the gentle and benevolent Hindus; and they shudder to take the life which they yet forbear not to render miserable. Provoke not then their wrath by thy presence, but fly, and live for those most happy and most blessed, who shall meet thy looks and hang upon thy words. For me, my days are numbered—sad and few, they will wear away in some trackless desert; where, lost to my cast, my country,

and my fame, death, welcome and wished for, shall yet find my soul wedded to one deathless bliss, the bliss of knowing I was beloved by thee." As she spoke, her head drooped on the trembling hands which were clasped in hers; her tears bathed them. A long and an affecting pause ensued.

A thousand feelings, opposite in their nature and powerful in their influence, seemed to struggle in the bosom of the Missionary: a thousand ideas, each at variance with the other, seemed to rush on and to agitate his mind. At last, withdrawing the hand which trembled in hers, and with the look and voice of one whose soul, after a long tu-

multuous conflict, is wound up to unalterable resolution, he said, "Luxima, I am a Christian, and a priest, and I am bound by certain vows to Heaven, from the observance of which no human power can absolve me; but I am also a man; as such, led by feeling, impelled by humanity, and bound by duty, to aid the weak and to succour the unfortunate:—but when I am myself the cause of sorrow to the innocent! of affliction to the unoffending!—O Luxima!" he passionately added, "lost to thee for ever, as lover or as husband, thinkest thou that I can also abandon thee as pastor and as friend? Hast thou, then, my daughter, the courage to leave for ever the temples of thy God, and

the land of thy forefathers? Art thou so assured of thyself and of me, as to follow me through distant regions, to follow me as my *disciple only;* to take up the cross of Christianity, and to devote what remains of thy young and blooming life exclusively to Heaven? Luxima, wilt thou follow me to Goa?"

"Follow *thee?*" wildly and tenderly repeated the Indian. An hysteric laugh burst from her lips, a crimson blush rushed over her face, and again deserting it, left it colourless. "Follow thee! O Heaven! *through life to death!*"

The Missionary arose: he averted his eyes from the fatal eloquence

of hers: he paced the temple with an unequal but rapid step; he seemed wrapt in thoughts wild and conflicting. At last, turning to Luxima, he fixed his eyes on her face, and said, with a voice firm, solemn, and impressive, "Daughter, it is well! from this moment I am thy guide on earth to heaven—no more!"

"No more!" faintly repeated Luxima, casting down her looks and sighing profoundly. Then, after a short pause, the Missionary extended his hand to raise her; but suddenly relinquishing the trembling form he supported, he moved away. Luxima, with a slow and feeble step, followed him to the entrance of the temple; but, as they reached toge-

ther the extremity of the cavern, the blue light of the subterraneous fire flashed on an image of Camdeo, her tutelar deity. She started, involuntarily paused before the idol, and bowed her head to the earth.

The Missionary threw on her a glance of severe reproof, and, taking her hand, would have led her on; but this little image had touched on the chord of her most profound feelings, and awakened the most intimately associated ideas of her mind.

"Father," she said, in a timid supplication of look and voice, "forgive me; but here, in this spot, no less an idol than that at whose shrine I bow—my nation's pride and

sex's glory—here did I devote myself to Heaven; and becoming the Priestess of mystic love, here did I renounce, by many a sacred vow, all human passion and all human ties."

"Luxima," he replied, still leading her on, "such as were thy vows, such *are* mine; let us alike keep them in our recollection, and renew them in our hearts. O my daughter! let us more than tacitly renew them in our hearts; let us together kneel, and——"

"*But not here, father!*" tremulously interrupted Luxima, looking fearfully round her—"not here!"

"No," he replied, and shuddered as he spoke, "not here!"

In silence, and with rapid steps, they passed beneath the frowning and gigantic arch, which hung its ponderous vault above the threshold of the Pagan temple; to its impervious gloom, its mysterious obscurity, succeeded the sudden brightness of the moonlight glen, in whose lovely solitudes the awful pile reared its massive heights, to intercept the rising, or catch the parting beam of day. Here the proscribed wanderers paused; they listened breathlessly, and gazed on every side; for danger, perhaps death, surrounded them: but not a sound disturbed the mystic silence, save the low murmurs of a gushing spring, which fell with more than mortal music from a mossy cliff, sparkling among the matted roots

of overhanging trees, and gliding, like liquid silver, beneath the network of the parasite plants. The flowers of the Mangoosten gave to the fresh air a balmy fragrance. The mighty rocks of the Pagoda, which rose behind in endless perspective, scaling the heavens, which seemed to repose upon their summits, lent the strong relief of their deep shadows to the softened twilight of the foreground.

"All is still," said the Missionary, pausing near the edge of the falling stream, and relinquishing the hand he had till now clasped; "all is still, and spirits of peace seem to walk abroad, to calm the tumult of human cares, to whisper hope, and

to inspire confidence. My daughter, eternity is in these moments. The brief and frail authority of man, reduced to its own insignificance, holds no jurisdiction now, and the spirit ascends free and fearless to the throne of its Creator." The Missionary stood gazing on the firmament as he spoke, his soul mingling with the magnificent and sublime objects he contemplated; then, turning his eyes on Luxima, he was struck with the peculiar character of her air and person. She looked, as she stood at a little distance, half hid in the mists of shade, like some impalpable form, which imaged on the air the spirit of suffering innocence, in the first moment of its ascent to heaven. Her head was thrown back, and a broken moon-

beam, falling through the trees, encompassed it with a faint glory: the tears of human suffering had not yet dried upon her cheek of snow; but it was the only trace of human feeling visible: her soul seemed to commune with him of whom it was an emanation.

"Luxima," said the Missionary, approaching her, "the moment of thy perfect conversion is surely arrived: in spirit thou belongest to Him who died to save thee; be then his also by those rites, which, in a place like this, he thought it not beneath him to receive, from the hands of one by whom he was preceded, as the star of the morning ushers in the radiance of the rising sun. O my daughter! ere toge-

ther we commence our perilous and trying pilgrimage, we have need of all the favour which Heaven's mercy can afford us, for we have much to dread, from others and ourselves; let then no tie be wanting which can bind us faster to virtue and religion. Luxima, innocent and afflicted as thou now art, pure and sublime as thou now lookest, feelest thou thyself not worthy to become a Christian in form as in faith?"

"If *thou* thinkest me not unworthy," she replied, in a low voice, "that which thou art, I am willing to be."

The Missionary led her forward, in silence, to the edge of the spring,

and blessing the living waters as they flowed, he raised his consecrated hands, and shed the dew of salvation upon the head of the proselyte, pronouncing, in a voice of inspiration, the *solemn sacrament of baptism.* All around harmonized with the holy act; Nature stood sole sponsor; the incense which filled the air, arose from the bosom of the earth; and the light which illuminated the ceremony, was light from heaven.

A long and solemn pause ensued; then the Missionary, clasping and holding up the hands of Luxima in his, said, "Father, receive into thy service this spotless being; for to thy service do I consecrate her."

A beam of religious triumph shone in the up-turned eyes of the Missionary. The conversion of the Priestess of Brahma was perfected, and human passion was subdued. "Daughter of heaven!" he said, "thou hast now nothing to fear; and I, on this side eternity, have nothing to hope." As he spoke the last words, an involuntary sigh burst from his lips, and he turned his eyes on the Christian vestal; but hers were fixed upon the Pagoda, the temple of her ancient devotion. Her look was sad and wild; she seemed absorbed and overwhelmed by the rapidity of emotions which had lately assailed her. "Let us proceed," he said, in a softened voice, "if thou be able; let us leave for ever the monument of the

dark idolatry which thou hast abjured." As he spoke, he took her arm to lead her on; but he started, and suddenly let it fall, for he found it was encircled with the muntra, or Brahminical rosary, from which the image of Camdeo was suspended. "Luxima," he said, "these are not the ornaments of a Christian vestal."

Luxima clasped her hands in agony; the tears dropped fast upon her bosom; and she fell at his feet, exclaiming, in a voice of tenderness and despair, "Oh! thou wilt not deprive me of these also? I have nothing left now *but these!* nothing to remind me, in the land of strangers, of my country and my people, save only these: it makes a part of the religion I have abandon-

ed, to respect the sacred ties of nature; does my new faith command me to break them? This rosary was fastened on my arm by a parent's tender hand, and bathed in Nature's holiest dew—a parent's tender tears: hold not the Christians relics, such as these, precious and sacred? Thou hast called thy religion the religion of the heart; will it not then respect the heart's best feelings?" A deep convulsive sob interrupted her words; all the ties she had broken pressed upon her bosom, and the affections of habit, those close-knit and imperishable affections, interwoven, by time and circumstance, with the very life-nerves of the heart, bore down for the moment, every other passion. The Outcast, with her eyes fixed

upon the religious ornaments of her youth, wept, as she gazed, her country, parents, friends—" and would not be comforted."

The Missionary sighed and was silent: he sighed to observe the strong influence of a religion, which so intimately connected itself with all the most powerful emotions of nature and earliest habits of life; and which, taking root in the heart, with its first feelings, could only be perfectly eradicated by the slow operation of expanding reason, by the strengthening efforts of moral perception, or by the miraculous effects of divine grace, and he was silent; because, the appeal which the tender and eloquent Indian made to his feelings, found an advocate in his breast it was impossible to resist.

Instead, therefore, of reproving her emotion, he suffered himself to be infected by its softness, and mingled his tears with hers.

The grief of Luxima subsided in the blessed consciousness of a sympathy so precious, so unexpected; and love's warm glow dried up the tear, which the grief of natural affection shed on the cheek of the Outcast. "Thou weepest for me," she said, chasing away the trembling drops which hung in her up-turned eyes; "and in the indulgence of a selfish feeling, I hazard thy safety and thy life! That cruel, that accusing Brahmin, who has watched my steps to my destruction, whom I mistook last night for the vision of that God he too zealously serves—may

he not even now lurk in these shades; or may he not, when we are vainly sought for in our respective asylums, seek us here?—O my father! forgive these tears. But it was the tenderness of him who lately cursed me; it was my aged grandsire, whom I have dragged to death and covered with shame (for something of my infamy must light on all my kindred); it was he who, with the morning's dawn, sent me the tidings of my approaching fate, and bade me fly and shun it: he would not see, he would not hear me; nor dare he breathe my name, but to heap curses on my head. But for this timely tender warning I should have else been hunted, like some noxious reptile, to wilds and wastes, there to die and be forgotten.

All day I lay concealed amidst the shades of the impervious banyan, to wait thy coming with the evening sun, to bid thee a last farewell, and urge thee to save thyself by an immediate flight; but by a miracle, wrought doubtlessly by thy God for thee, that which seemed to lead us to destruction, became the wondrous mean of preservation; and we found safety where we could only hope for death."

"Luxima," said the Missionary, "let us believe that He, who alone could save us, still extends around us the shelter of his wing. Let us, while yet thou hast strength, fly these fatal shades. Behind those pine-covered rocks, which the moon now silvers, there lies, I know, a deep and

entangled glen, which, I have heard, is held in superstitious horror, and never approached by pious Hindus. This glen leads to Bembar, by many a solitary path, made to facilitate the march of the caravan from Thibet to Tatta, at this season of the year *. It was but yesterday, some straggling troops, belonging to the caravan, passed through the valley, and halted at no great distance hence, to traffic with the Cashmirian merchants: these, as they often halt, we may overtake in some lone way, out of the view of thy intolerant country-

* "Selon les témoignages de tous les Katchmeriens, on voyoit partir chaque année de leur pays plusieurs caravans."—*Voyages de* BERNIER.

men." While he spoke, they had proceeded on, and reached the entrance to a ravine in the rocks, which, dark and tremendous, seemed like a closing chasm above their heads, threatening destruction; but, when they had reached its extremity, they found themselves in a delicious glen, through whose trees were discernible the crescent banners of the Mogul camp; and the sky-lamps, which marked the outposts of the midnight guards. At this sight, the prophetic warning and generous offers of the gallant Solyman rushed with equal force to the minds of the wanderers; but both remained silent—Luxima, from an instinctive delicacy, which mocked the refinement of acquired sentiment; the Missionary, from a feel-

ing less laudable and less disinterested. Both involuntarily turned their eyes on each other, and suddenly withdrawing them, changed colour; for, in spite of the awful vows since made, and the virtuous resolutions since formed, the hearts of each throbbed responsively to the dangerous recollection of that fatal scene, to which the unexpected presence of the Mogul Prince had given birth.

Ere the mild and balmy night had passed its noon, the weary proselyte, exhausted equally from fatigue of mind and body, felt that she would be unable to proceed, if she snatched not the invigorating refreshment of a short repose. The Missionary, with ten-

der watchfulness, was the first to observe her faltering steps, and sought out for her a mossy bank, cradled by the luxuriant branches of a mango-tree; and, withdrawing to a little distance, he at once guarded her slumber and gave himself up to meditate on some precise plan for their future pilgrimage; which, if they could overtake the caravan, whose track they had already discovered, would be attended with but few difficulties. Yet he dared no longer seek "the highways and public places," to promulgate his doctrines, and to evince his zeal. Withheld less by a principle of self-preservation than by his fears for the safety and even life of his innocent proselyte; he also felt his enthusiasm in the cause weakened,

by the apparent impossibility of its success; for he perceived that the religious prejudices of Hindostan were too intimately connected with the temporal prosperity of its inhabitants, with the established opinions, with the laws, and even with the climate of the country, to be universally subverted, but by a train of moral and political events, which should equally emancipate their minds from antiquated error, in which they were absorbed, and which should destroy the fundamental principles of their loose and ill-digested government. He almost looked upon the Mission, in which he had engaged, as hopeless; and he felt that the miracle of that conversion, by which he expected to evince the sacred truth of

the cause in which he had embarked, could produce no other effect than a general abhorrence of him who laboured to effect it, and of her who had already paid the forfeit of all most precious to the human breast, for that partial proselytism, to which her affections, rather than her reason, had induced her. Yet, when he reflected that he should return to Goa, the scenes of his former triumphs, followed only by one solitary disciple, and that disciple a young and lovely woman, his mind became confused, and he trembled to dwell on an idea fraught with a thousand mortifying and cruel recollections. The dawn had already beamed upon his harassing vigils, when Luxima stood before him, resembling the star of

the morning, bright in her softness, the mists of a tender sadness hanging on the lustre of her looks. The Missionary was revived by her presence; but the sweet and subtle transport, which circulated through his veins, as he gazed on the being who now considered him as her sole providence, he endeavoured to conceal beneath a tranquil coldness of manner, which the secret ardour of his feelings, the delicacy of his situation, and the pure and virtuous resolutions of his mind, alike rendered necessary and laudable.

As they proceeded, he spoke to her of the plans he had devised, and of his intention of placing her in a religious house when they arrived at Goa. He spoke to her of

the false religion she had abandoned, and of the pure faith she had embraced.

Luxima answered only by gentle sighs, and by looks, which seemed to say, "Whatever may be my future destiny, I am at least *now* near you."

The Missionary sought to avoid these looks, which, when they met his eye, sunk to his heart, and disturbed his best resolutions; for never had his Neophyte looked more lovely. Supported by a white wand, which he had formed for her; of a bamboo, she moved lightly and timidly by his side, like the genius of the sweet and solitary shades, in which they wandered. The course

of the rivers, the variation of the soil, and the beacons held out to them by the surrounding mountains, with whose forms they were well acquainted, were their guides; while the milk of the young and luscious cocoa-nut, the cheering nectar extracted from the pulp of the bilva-fruit, and the rice, and delicious fruits, which on every side presented themselves, afforded at once nutrition and refreshment *. Sometimes catching, sometimes losing, the faint track of the caravan, the conviction of increasing safety, and the certainty of overtaking it

* "Il faut surtout considérer que l'abstinence de la chair des animaux est une suite de la nature du climat."—*Essai sur les Mœurs des Nations, &c. &c. &c.*

at Bembar, left them scarcely a fear, and scarcely a hope, on the subject. For to wander through the lovely and magnificent valley of Cashmire, was but to loiter amidst the enjoyments of Eden; and to proceed by each other's side—to catch the half-averted eyebeam, which penetrated the soul—to observe the sudden glow which mantled on the cheek—to participate in the same blissful feeling, and yet to heighten, by submitting it to the same pure sense of virtue, was a state of being too exquisite not to obliterate, in its transient enjoyment, the memory of the past and the apprehension of the future. Restrained and reserved even in the intimacy of their intercourse, they sought to forget the existence of a passion it was now so dangerous to

cherish. The Missionary was regulated by religion and by honour; the Indian, by sentiment and by instinctive delicacy. Solicitude tempered by reserve, tenderness blended with respect, distinguished the manner of the Priest. Modesty, which shrunk from the appearance of intrusion; and bashfulness, trembling to betray the feelings it guarded, marked the conduct of the Neophyte. Silent, except on subjects of religious sublimity, a look, suddenly caught and as suddenly withdrawn, alone betrayed their dangerous secret. They were frequently parted during the ardours of the day, which prevented their continuing their journey; and sometimes, when the night-dews fell heavily, the guardian Priest sought

out for his weary charge a grassy couch, where the madhucca had spread its downy leaves; or where a luxurious and perfumed shade was afforded by the sephalica, whose flowers unfold only their bloom and odour to the sighs of night, and droop and wither beneath the first ray the sun darts o'er their fragile loveliness: while *he*, not daring, even by a look, to violate the pure and seraph slumber of confiding innocence, waked only to guard her repose; or slept, to woo to his fancy the dream, which too often, in illusive visions, gave to his heart her whom waking he trembled to approach. When they arose, the twilight of the dawn conducted them to the respective bath, which innumerable springs afforded;

and, when again they met, they offered together the incense of the heart to Heaven, and proceeded on their pilgrimage. The path they had taken was so sequestered, that they seldom risked discovery; but when, amidst the haze of distance, they observed a human form, or caught a human sound, they plunged into the umbrage of the surrounding shades, until the absence of the intruder again gave them up to solitude and silence. It was in moments such as these only, that the high mind of the Missionary felt that it had forfeited its claim to the independence which belongs to unblemished rectitude, and that the Indian remembered she was an alien and an Outcast.

THE END OF VOL. II.

S. Gosnell, *Printer, Little Queen Street, London.*

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